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CHURCH, MINISTRY, AND SACRAMENTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

W. T. WHITLEY M.A., LL.D.

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BY

W. T. WHITLEY, M.A., LL.D.

Ye shall be My witnesses

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TO

MY MOTHER

AND TO THE MEMORY OF

THOMAS GEORGE ROOKE

WHO TAUGHT ME BY PRECEPT AND EXAMPLE

HOW TO STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

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INTRODUCTION

In the poem of "Christmas Eve," Robert Browning presents three groups of people interested by the story of Christ. There is the full conventicle of Zion Chapel Meeting, engrossed in a sermon with ten heads; the whole basilica of St. Peter's at Rome, alive with men all expectant for the supreme moment of the ritual at the high altar; and students trying to slake their thirst by listening to the discourse of a Göttingen professor on the sources of the Christ myth. The lecturer he dismisses as not really Christian, only a literary critic lured away by some tricksy demon from Greek grammar and drama to practise on the New Testament. He recognizes two distinct types of Christian, adequately represented by Papist and Dissenter. The strong point of the one is the desire to consecrate literature, song, architecture, and all art to God, worshipping Him with beauty. The other worships rather in spirit and in truth, believing that when two or three meet together to pray in Christ's name, He is there. With the latter the poet casts in his lot.

These two classes of Christians are at bottom one in their thoughts of God and man, their sense of sin, their relief from it through Jesus Christ, their enjoyment of fellowship with Him, their hope for a fuller union hereafter. Even their ideals of life for the individual now are not very inconsistent; but in

everything related to joint worship, to its leaders, to organization, both ideals and practices differ deeply. As these differences belong to the earthly and temporary, we may hope that when the mists of earth have melted away, the prayer of our Lord will be completely fulfilled, and all may be one even as He and the Father are one.

Meantime, it is surely well to scan these differences closely, and seek to lessen them. Can it be that Christ has left to His followers no intelligible and adequate directions as to His Church, His Ministry, His Worship? Doubtless there must be change and developement, as with all that is not independent of time. But while the Founder based His Church on a rock, each party accuses the other of marring the work by the style of its building. All depends on knowing the Founder's intentions. The Roman Catholic has steadily tested his building by tradition and the Bible; the Baptist—most logical of dissenters—has, since the Amsterdam Confession of 1611, taken as his test the New Testament alone as giving the will of Christ. He is not only Lord of all, but Head of The Church; He died for it, He founded it, He claimed exclusive authority in it, and He charged it carry on His work in the world, inspired by His continual presence. On this subject of The Church, at least, every guiding principle is gathered in the New Testament.

Evangelicals generally discard most tradition, but they have not always observed that Sacerdotalists have their only Biblical defence in the Old Testament. An idle or self-absorbed church, an intrusive priesthood, a magical worship, find no countenance in the New Testament. A congregation of Jehovah there certainly was, and its purpose and career may to some extent

prefigure Christ's Church: but when we can study our Lord's directions, why recur to the earlier rough sketch, wherein we do not know which lines were essential and which ornamental, which were significant of Jehovah's will and which given for the hardness of men's hearts? Our Lord was born under The Law, but He redeemed those who were under The Law, that all men might receive the adoption of sons. The foregoing commandment was annulled because it was weak and unprofitable, and a better hope was introduced, whereby we draw near to God with Jesus as our only High Priest. When we seek information about The Church, what need of studying Law, Priesthood, Circumcision, and other obsolete arrangements of the Old Covenant? He has mediated a New Covenant into which we may enter. The building is up and the scaffolding down, do not obscure the stately fane by re-erecting mere preparatory poles: the new seamless garment will be marred if torn and patched with a piece of the old.

In the New Testament we have what in the judgement of early Christians are the genuine relics of the apostolic age. Literary questions have been raised whether the pastoral epistles and the gospel according to Matthew have been interpolated with passages vital to the present theme, but these speculations are not supported by any external evidence. The verdict is to be given not by literary specialists, but by those who, like the writers and collectors, are taught by the Spirit; and modern Christian opinion ratifies ancient in nearly every case. This commentary is intended for those who acquiesce in the verdict that the New Testament is the work of the apostles, prophets, and evangelists of the New Covenant. To them was committed the charge of

laying the foundation of The Church, and from them we may gather all that we need to know as to its purpose and plan. It is well to connect their teaching with the actual growth of the building, and therefore, while for popular use the familiar order of the English Bible is followed, a note is given as to the order of the writings. In this way the labours of Göttingen professors may be utilized in God's service: and for the Old Testament we may accept their assurance that, whatever the relative dates of its parts, as a whole we have it in substantially the same form in which it was used by the apostles and by our Lord. His word may then help men to hold the scales, and see whether Zion Chapel or St. Peter's presents the better embodiment of Christ's will for His Church on earth.

It would have been easy and useful to single out the subjects often grouped under the head of Doctrine of the Church, and to gather the Bible teaching under familiar logical headings; yet in classifying and treating topically it is too easy to fill in the chinks between the rocks of scripture truth with untempered mortar. As the central thesis here is that on every essential point the Head of The Church has left adequate directions, it seems more appropriate to take every passage that is generally quoted on these subjects, rightly or wrongly, and to comment on each by itself. Thus we may aim at declaring the whole counsel of God on the matter. Cross references will lessen any inconvenience, and an index will enable a single point to be worked out thoroughly in the light of scripture teaching. It may then appear that on some of the points most fiercely debated, the one Lawgiver has laid down no law but that of mutual love. So we may learn not to go beyond what is written; but having received the

spirit which is of God, comparing the words taught by the Spirit, we may humbly hope to learn the mind of Christ.

These pages were chiefly written in the summer of 1902 by a broad Canadian river, with no other aids to the study of the Greek Testament than a concordance and a copy of the American Standard Edition of the Revised Version, from which all quotations are made. But as they are going to press, it is with great pleasure that the opportunity is taken of profiting by Canon Bruce's "Apostolic Order and Unity" and Mr. Lambert's Kerr Lectures on "The Sacraments in the New Testament." These books, by their emphatic teaching of the same general doctrine, justify the hope that all Evangelicals are drawing more closely together. They are, moreover, based, as their titles indicate, on the same principle that obtains here: "It is necessary for the earnest student first of all to lay the foundation of a thorough knowledge of all that is contained on the subject in the Scriptures of truth": "It is to the New Testament, then, that we must primarily go in search of a Christian doctrine of the sacraments." The only important differences arise when they depart from the foundation and go secondarily to the developements of Church history.

Even here, indeed, as the present writer tried to show in 1897, however imperfectly, the witness of history to Baptist principles is worth considering; and Canon Winterbotham wrote in the *Expositor*, VI 5^{378}, that on the points chiefly discussed at the Reformation, it may be "unhesitatingly claimed that the whole trend of modern religious opinion is towards the Anabaptist position." But the question is whether, when Mr.

Lambert on page 6 objects to Bishop Gore reading the scripture "in the light of the Catholic Fathers and ancient bishops," he has not estopped himself from "reading the New Testament usages in the light of the following time" on page 227.

And again, when after taking in evidence down to 250 A.D., and even for another century, he honestly avows that a certain custom was "not the rule of the first age," why can he not be content with the solid foundation of the New Testament?—why must he erect for it a flying buttress from the Old? His doctrine of "the organic continuity of the two dispensations" is evolved from six texts. Five assert our continuity with the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and not with the Jews at all; the contrast is expressly drawn in Gal 3^{9-14}, to which he appeals: and the sixth has its true bearing indicated by his own remark that "the old dispensation was for ever and utterly done away." But his adducing such an argument shows that the present writer has not been beating the air by the somewhat elaborate proof that the organic continuity of our age is with that of Abraham, that the whole Jewish dispensation was an interlude, that the Jewish Law is of no value to the Christian either as a means of grace or as a code of morals, only as a provisional and symbolic system foreshadowing Christ, at whose death it was superseded and abolished root and branch.

Were not the principles at stake so important, it would have been ungracious thus to criticize two slight differences, when the general agreement is so extensive and so minute. Mr. Lambert has been so faithful an exegete that Principal Rainy in the *Expository Times* for August deplores his "needlessly bare conception of the sacraments," and looks in vain to "see how the

New Testament teaching reaches out to the sacramental doctrine of the Shorter Catechism." It is, however, pleasant to find Principal Rainy discussing baptism and congratulating Mr. Lambert on having "a firm hold of the principle that sacraments presuppose faith": for evidently he must be on the verge of abandoning infant baptism. And it is more pleasant to share with Mr. Lambert the "aspirations regarding the unity of Christ's Church on earth which are cherished more and more eagerly, and on very different quarters of the field, by multitudes of Christian men." It is equally pleasant, and would be more surprising, but that Canon Bruce has been a missionary, to coincide with him in the results of a careful and prayerful study, and to agree that it may teach every honest student "all that is knowable of what is truly apostolic in the ecclesiastical organization of the Church, and be a help towards casting down the walls of separation between various Christian Churches, or, at least, of discerning between the limits of the city of God defined by the Spirit of God and the walls of separation built by man."

*** The whole body of Christians from the resurrection till the second advent is often referred to as The Church.

A local company of believers is often referred to as a church.

The commands laid on the children of Israel are often referred to as The Law.

Quotations are in double inverted commas, paraphrases in single.

PROLOGUE

NOTES ON A FEW PASSAGES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

A copy and shadow of the heavenly things.

GENESIS 12^{1-3}. This is the great **promise**, made originally to Abram, confirmed and enlarged after his obedience on Moriah, 22, renewed to Isaac and his children, 26^{2-5}, then to Jacob and his children, 28^{13-15}. Its lasting interest is that in Abraham's seed should all families of the earth be blessed. Paul expounds that the fulfilment in Jesus Christ was designed from the first, Gal 3^{8}. The promise is of great interest to every Christian, but is not associated with the formation of a community, nor with the observance of any rite. Its bearing on the doctrine of The Church is of the slightest; but to distinguish promise, covenant, and law is important from the outset.

17^{1-14}. At this time God offered to enter into special relations with Abraham and his posterity in a certain line: the condition was that every boy born in the line, and every man adopted into it, should be circumcised. The former offer of the land was renewed, made perpetual, and annexed to this, and the whole was thrown into the form of a **Covenant**.

An ordinary covenant is a double agreement by which two parties take mutual pledges; if either breaks his

pledge, the other is freed from his. Such a covenant is illustrated at 21^{22-32}, 26^{26-31}; we see Isaac and Abimelech swearing to each other and joining in a feast: Jacob and Laban swore, sacrificed, feasted, raised a memorial, 31^{44-54}. But God's covenants were proposed and dictated by Himself, and often took the form of a solemn promise on His side alone without any answering obligation being expressed. Thus with Noah, 9^{8-17}, with Abram, 15^{18}; God gave promises and exacted none, but confirmed by a sign. The covenant promise to Noah is good for all men; that with Abram was personal at the first, but on this occasion it was made perpetual, on conditions, but limited still to one family.

This covenant, then, has nothing to do with those who are not circumcised. It has nothing to do with salvation: there is no word about blessing all nations through the Seed. It assures to Isaac's posterity the land of Palestine and a unique relation with God, and a modern Jew may claim it for himself and his children.

There are other covenants made by God with individuals, for the benefit of themselves and their posterity. An everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure was made with David, that his descendants should be kings, II Sam 23^{5}; and the covenant with the Levites, Deut $33^{9,10}$, that they should form an hereditary priesthood, resembles this and is coupled with it, Jer 33^{21}. The descendants of Abraham, of Levi, of David thus are in special relations with God. The great covenant at Sinai was with the children of Israel unitedly and those who should join them by birth or adoption. With no one of these has the Christian of non-Jewish descent any direct relation; the New Covenant ratified at Calvary is that which concerns him.

As for the so-called covenants of works and of grace, such terms are not used in scripture, and the terms are badly chosen to describe God's dealings with the race.

17^{22-27}. The rite of **Circumcision** was already known, and was here stamped with God's approval. If elsewhere it was a redemptive sacrifice that initiated a youth to the responsibilities of manhood in his tribe, its application received an important change. For Abraham here, as for the adult generation that entered Canaan, Josh 5^{3}, it was a rite administered after a profession of their faith, a point on which Paul insisted, Rom 4^{10}. And this would also be true of freemen who voluntarily joined the nation. But the usual case was that of infants a week old who were circumcised, and thus they were from this early age initiated into the nation and given a right to claim the fulfilment of the covenant—namely, a residence in the land. The rite is still practised among all the descendants of Abraham, and is still connected by them with this covenant to inherit the land. More spiritual associations were gathered around it in time, and it became regarded as an emblem of purifying the heart, see Deut 30^{6}, Jer $9^{25, 26}$.

It was not abolished on the introduction of Christianity. Although some renegade Jews attempted to be uncircumcised, Christians were expressly forbidden to imitate them, I Cor 7^{18}. Timothy, because of a half-Jewish descent, was circumcised by Paul, Acts 16^{3}. On the other hand, it was not carried over to Gentile Christians, and this was a deliberate decision of Jewish Christians, Acts 15. At no point in the discussion was it suggested that baptism replaced it. The only valid analogy seems to be that as a child was first actually born into the Jewish nation, and this fact was speedily recognized by the symbolic ceremony of

circumcision, so, when by regeneration a person becomes a child of God, that fact should be speedily recognized by the symbol of baptism.

Exodus 2^{24}. Apparently no communication had been made by Jehovah since Israel was bidden go to Egypt, Gen 46^{3}. The **covenant** made with Abraham had been renewed with Isaac to the exclusion of Ishmael, etc., with Israel to the exclusion of Esau, but the children of Jacob had not been spoken with; neither Judah nor Joseph could claim God's sanction on any choice of him —Reuben and Simeon and Levi were not shut out as other elder sons had been. The time now arrived for the covenant to be acted upon. It was in abeyance for some generations, but not broken, much less fulfilled. To-day it is in abeyance, but not broken, and not quite fulfilled perhaps even yet in Jesus Christ. The children of Israel have returned twice to Palestine, and may return once again when it shall belong to the promised Seed.

12^{1-14}. Hitherto only one **rite** could claim institution by or sanction of Jehovah—circumcision for all the descendants of Abraham. Now another was devised by Him and enjoined on the descendants of Israel. The one was the condition of possessing the land, a memorial of the faith of Abraham; the other was on the first occasion the condition of deliverance from death and from bondage, but in after years a memorial of that deliverance, in itself a condition of no future benefit. In neither case was a material rite the condition of obtaining a spiritual blessing, or the means of conveying it.

The details of observance on the first occasion were not reproduced in after years, nor is there any written command for varying them. But intelligent men saw

it would be absurd, when settled in Canaan, to eat the passover ready for an instant journey; they were in the land of promise and hoped to stay, so they ate the passover at their ease. Details of ceremony are not necessarily binding, but it is important that no significant detail be dropped, that no detail with a false significance be retained, and that no detail of unimportance be rendered obligatory by mere human agreement. For modern ceremonial, any rite ordered by our Lord must be observed; its meaning is to be grasped, and the details of ritual, however adjusted to time, place, and circumstances, must still represent the truths associated with the ceremony by our Lord or His apostles. Nothing else can be compulsory.

12^{21-28}. The passover feast was distinctly family in its nature, and herein resembles circumcision. Both were instituted before there was any priesthood, and were "valid" without the assistance of any special class.

Both, again, were originally pledges of **faith**. Abraham received the sign as a visible, tangible seal of his faith already existing, Rom 4^{11}; the people here were still in bondage, Pharaoh had again refused to release them, yet they believed that they were about to be delivered, and ate the meal girt for the journey. But on every other occasion, except Josh 5^{2-9}, these ceremonies were no expression of faith. This passover was commemorated, not exactly repeated; it was to be annually kept as a **memorial**, Ex 12^{14}, a memorial of a deliverance in the past. This passover was sacrificed, Ex 12^{27}; future observances, except in Deut 16^{2-6}, are said to be kept. A similar distinction is important between the real last supper of the Lord and the subsequent commemorations.

12^{43-49}. In so far as circumcision corresponds to

baptism, and the passover to the Lord's supper, this suggests that unbaptized persons may not commune at the Lord's table. But at most the presumption is raised; the proof of any such proposition must be derived from the New Testament alone; and there, too, must be examined in what sense circumcision corresponds to baptism, or the passover to the Lord's supper.

13^{1-16}. The sanctification of the firstborn was with express reference to the national deliverance from Egypt. As the event did not occur to our ancestors, it does not need commemorating by us. The same remark applies to circumcision and passover and all the numerous rites soon imposed on the Israelites.

16. Here we meet the **sabbath** for the first time in sacred history, as observed by men. In Babylonia, whence Abraham had come, certain days were called sabbaths—the seventh, fourteenth, nineteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth of each lunar month; and on these many occupations were forbidden, including even worship, in order to secure rest. But there is no evidence yet that such customs obtained in Canaan or in Egypt; and it would appear that the rest on every seventh day, irrespective of the lunar month, was novel to the Israelites, and it needed emphasizing by repeated word and miracle before its observance was adopted.

19—24. These chapters are of great importance, narrating the formation of the **covenant** from which the Jewish scriptures are called by us the Old Covenant, or Old Testament. The covenant in question was new to the Israelites, not propounded before, though its conditions included many that were old; it was expressly offered to the children of Israel, and was their peculiar privilege, separating them from others.

First Jehovah offered that, on conditions not yet specified, He would select Israel as a nation to stand in a special relation to Him ; though in a sense all nations were His, Israel should be separated as a nation and made a kingdom of priests. The people agreed, and promised obedience to the commands that should be given. After ceremonial preparation, they drew near to hear them ; but after ten were uttered, they were terrified, and begged that the rest might be given through a messenger, and not directly. God conceded the request, and continued announcing the conditions of the covenant to Moses ; they occupy chapters 21—23. When the people heard them in full, they accepted intelligently the obligation to obey them. Moses wrote out the whole, and the covenant was ratified by ceremonies, including sacrifices, reading the conditions, and partaking of a feast before God. Here we have the ordinary features of a mutual covenant on a magnificent scale.

The preface to the whole book of the covenant declares unmistakably with whom it was made : "I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The concluding paragraph contains a few temporary promises and directions for the next few years, but as a whole it was meant for **the whole nation** until authoritatively superseded. Like all covenants, it could be ended by both parties agreeing to rescind it, or by one party breaking his promise and so absolving the other from any further obligation, or by both parties fulfilling their agreements. Like most covenants, it stands or falls as a whole, and cannot be separated into two sections, one part indefeasible, but the other not of the essence of the contract. Like many covenants, it

incorporates several provisions found elsewhere, dictated by common sense, which may well be embodied in a new covenant if the old comes to an end: for instance, for a judge to accept gifts from a suitor is esteemed wrong outside Judaism; parricide is generally punished with death to-day in civilized communities. It also contains many provisions which imply a state of opinion now considered low; slavery and polygamy were tolerated, though improved rules were laid down. It contains others which are morally indifferent, though advisable for reasons of health or sentiment or good farming, such as a prohibition to eat braxy mutton, to boil a kid in its mother's milk, to till ground seven years running.

But whatever we think of the wisdom of voluntarily adopting these rules, we must note that as they stand they form **one inseparable whole**, of which James wrote that if the whole Law be kept except one point, the failure vitiates the whole attempt. And we are further to remember that this covenant was offered to, and the conditions enjoined on, Israel only. The rules were not given by Jehovah to other people, were not known in this form by others, and were not meant for them; although some of the rules simply clothe with fresh authority practices which were widely accepted, and may even have been prescribed in much older codes, such as that of Hammurabi. Thus the Egyptians had nothing to do with the command, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me": this is put in contrast with Egypt. Doubtless it would have been well if Egypt had been ready for such a lofty ideal, but God's way was to train one people at a time. Similarly the peoples of India were ignorant for ages that Israel was forbidden to make or use idols. On the other hand,

the Amerinds have long known that it was wrong to steal; some Australian blackfellows have tribal codes forbidding murder and adultery; and this was quite independent of the Jewish Law.

Whether any of these orders are **obligatory on us** to-day depends on what our Lord Jesus says on the point. He is the only Lawgiver; He has legislated for the whole race, and not for Israel alone. Speaking to Israelites, He commented on some of these rules, asking a higher morality and raising a loftier standard. Most of these refer only to deeds, a few take words into account, one touches also the thought of the heart. He extended this last principle to every case, and, while neglecting these and hundreds of other precepts for Israel, selected two into which He read a deeper meaning, so summing up the whole duty of man in the two maxims, Love God heartily, Love men as yourself. These two principles forbid polytheism, idolatry, false swearing, murder, adultery, theft, covetousness; these principles will lead us to welcome the Lord's Day as a day of rest and of Christian labour, and to honour our parents: thus they embody everything valuable in the ten commandments. These principles forbid us to enslave our fellows, to marry several wives at once, to exact eye for eye and tooth for tooth: thus they contradict several provisions of The Law. These principles help us to decide many points left undecided for the ancient Israelite, and allow us liberties withheld from him. We gain nothing to guide our conduct by referring to a code intended for Israel centuries ago, and we had better guide ourselves directly by the words of Him who fulfilled the Old Covenant and inaugurated a new one for all mankind.

25^{1-9}. The terms of the covenant had been announced

and accepted; the legal side had been completed. But between a loving God and His peculiar people there must be frequent **intercourse**, and means for this were now provided.

Two points were laid down at the outset. God prescribed how He was to be approached, both generally and particularly, even laying down minute directions as to furniture and ritual. But He sought free-will offerings prompted by love rather than duty. These points commend themselves if we think of intercourse between any governor and his subjects, and are equally advisable to-day even between a Father and His children. Other means of access may be prescribed now, yet still it is for God to announce and for man to use.

28[1]. The nation as a whole was to be a kingdom of **priests**. Already young men had acted as sacrificing priests when the covenant was ratified. But now five were singled out of one family for this purpose, representatives of the whole nation.

Priests are taken from among men, appointed to represent them in matters relating to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. They cannot assume the honour, but have it conferred on them by God.

Israel then ought to have represented the world towards God, and the sacrifices should have been for all men. That ideal was true, as the apostle John indicates, but was too lofty to be understood in the days of Moses. Education was needed, and it began by emphasizing that even priests, as a nation, are compassed with infirmity, and must offer on their own behalf; so they might learn to bear gently with the ignorant and erring Gentiles. This was taught by selecting out of the nation a family, to be to the nation

as the nation was to the world; and presently by selecting one of the family to be to his relatives as they were to the nation. What they were shown in the person of Aaron and the others, they might presently learn to be true of themselves on a larger scale.

To-day all Christians are priests, and Christ the High Priest. There is no need for any intervening class. Christ has offered the one atoning sacrifice; we offer praise and gifts, but no further sacrifice for sin. He acted for the whole world, we act for the whole world. So deeply is the sense of sin and of sacrifice for it implanted in the heart that where the true atoning priesthood of Christ is unknown or forgotten or not preached, and where Christians forget their priestly obligations to mankind, there will spring up pseudo-priests, aspiring to an exclusive position, though unable to show any call from God as evinced by soul-winning and soul-helping, and though relying chiefly on honour conferred by others as ignorant and erring as themselves.

29^{1-35}. The rites of **installation** to the priesthood included washing the priests, clothing them with an emblematic uniform, offering blood at the altar and burning fat upon it, sprinkling blood on the candidates, giving them some food of which the rest was burned on the altar.

Those who assume an exclusive title to the priesthood to-day should either copy these ceremonies exactly or explain why some are discarded and others invented. The institution of Christian ministers is quite another thing, and any ceremonies appropriate may be based on New Testament precedents and principles. All the guidance these Old Covenant practices afford is in

relation to the recognition of a Christian priest as such—*i.e.* to the recognition of a new Christian.

Even so, it would be an error to copy these ceremonies; rather, we must ask what they represent, and ask whether there is any corresponding fact to be represented when a man becomes a Christian. For, as always, the Old Testament is not to mould our conceptions or practices; it may at best illustrate and furnish material for understanding better the sufficient directions and teachings of the New.

It is worth while, in passing, to note the distinction between washing with water, 29^{4}, pouring oil on the head, 29^{7}, pouring blood at the base of the altar, 29^{12}, sprinkling blood and oil upon Aaron, 29^{21}, washing the hands and the feet, 30^{18-21}.

31^{12-17}. The situation of this paragraph is singular, in association with rules that were purely temporary and national. It may have been a warning not to let the tasks of making the tabernacle encroach on the sabbath, contrast Matt 12^{5}; it may point still to the fact that all are symbolical, and that as priests foreshadowed Christ in one aspect of His activity, as sacrifices foreshadowed the need and provision of atonement, as the tabernacle foreshadowed the means of fellowship between God and man, so the **sabbath** foreshadowed the great time of rest when God shall have ended His work of redemption, and shall pronounce all very good.

The actual weekly sabbath is here viewed as a distinctly national institution declared to be a sign between God and Israel. It may therefore be based on one ancient fact, and may symbolize another; but its observance in the Israelitish fashion cannot be obligatory on those who are not of the children of Israel. The observance of one day in seven has Divine precedent;

which day shall be chosen depends on the associations of the days, and how it shall be observed is a matter of precedent and precept to be found in the New Testament.

32. The breach by the people of the second commandment, by making an image for worship, cancelled the covenant so recently made. Jehovah was at once exonerated from keeping His side of it, as Moses promptly recognized, for he begged that it might be renewed.

34. The persistency and self-devotion of Moses obtained his desire, and some of the previous orders were reiterated and written by him, while the initial ten words were written afresh by God, 34^{1}, Deut 10^{4}. When the news of pardon and restoration was brought, the subject of the **sabbath** again received a prominence which indicates its novelty, 35^{1-3}, while what we consider the weightier matters of honesty, chastity, and truth were taken for granted as so well commended by conscience that they needed no special enforcement. To mention the sabbath as an exception proves that the custom was to keep no sabbaths previously.

Leviticus 4^{16-18}. In the account of the manipulations with the blood of the offerings, we have **dipping**, sprinkling, and pouring clearly distinguished. So also at $8^{6, 11, 12}$, when the priests were installed, the actions of washing them with water, sprinkling oil on the altar, pouring oil on their heads, are not confounded together. Compare also $9^{9, 12}$.

10^{1} shows how unacceptable it is when, even with the best intentions, plain directions for the worship of God are neglected, and mere human rites are substituted.

14 affords further excellent illustrations of the

differences between **dipping** in blood, sprinkling blood, washing clothes, bathing the body in water, dipping the finger in oil, sprinkling oil, putting oil in the hand upon the head, etc. The next three chapters describe other series of cleansings. It will be found that water is never sprinkled, water is never poured, but men and clothes are sometimes dipped in water.

21 lays certain restrictions on priests, and provides that those of the seed of Aaron cannot enter on active duty unless free from blemish. These correspond to **restrictions on Christians** who may not ally with non-Christians, and who are not fit to do Christian work, while morally blemished and unrepentant. The directions as to Christians rest not on these passages here, but on explicit statements as in II Cor 6^{14}.

There is no hint that a descendant of Aaron was ever forced into service unwillingly; his consent and his application would be needed before his installation. So the sons and disciples of Christian parents consent or apply for recognition as Christians.

22^{25} raises the question whether the **gift of a non-Christian** can be regarded as an offering to God, and points to the solution that while it may be accepted as a gift, it has no sort of value as an instalment of, or a substitute for, repentance and obedience. Our Lord did not refuse the dinner offered Him by Simon the Pharisee, nor advise the rejection of the rich hypocrites' gold; it was only scrupulous priests who cavilled at putting into the treasury of Jehovah the price of blood. It may be good taste not to ask non-Christians for gifts towards Christian work; it would be bad taste to refuse a freely offered gift, though it may be honest to explain that such a gift cannot win God's forgiveness.

26 ends a section of rules, and brings to a climax those about the **sabbaths**, which were again mentioned at 19^{30} and expanded in 23. Neglect of the weekly sabbath is anticipated, and shall be punished by exile from the land for a time equal to the sabbaths not observed. The tone suggests that sabbaths were still a novelty, and that repeated and earnest legislation was needed to enforce them.

Numbers 8^{7} mentions **sprinkling** the water of expiation on the Levites before they washed their clothes and cleansed themselves. This water is described in 19, where it is shown to be a mixture of running water with ashes from a cow, wood, hyssop and scarlet. There is no such rite in the Old Testament as the sprinkling of pure water, but the bathing in water is a frequent ceremony of cleansing, and obviously suggests the thorough purifying of heart needed for God's service.

11 introduces a new order of men, chosen not for family ties, but for merit, and now endowed with **spiritual gifts** to aid in the conduct of the nation's affairs. The priests could do the mere routine work of the tabernacle, it needed Divine help to govern.

16 records a tangle of rebellions against the new arrangements. Some Levites objected to be excluded from the highest functions of the priesthood: their error conveys no warning against unordained men acting as ministers of the gospel, but has a sharp rebuke for such Christians as try to encroach on the prerogative of Christ. He alone made the **sacrifice** for sin, and desires **confession** of sin to Himself. Others objected to the supremacy of Moses, despite the multiplied evidence of his commission from God. His vindication may assure men to-day who stand outside

the official hierarchies and the aristocratic groups that, if conscious of an **inward call** of God to speak for Him, He will prove that call by visible signs, such as the converts to whom Paul pointed when similarly challenged.

18^{1-7} draws the line sharply between priests, Levites, and others, and excludes the last from all representative functions. An ordinary Israelite might bring and slay his own sacrifice, but even then the more significant duties were reserved for Levites and priests; the ordinary Israelite might not act for another. So still all that any sinner may do is to come and make the great confession for himself; atonement is made for him by Christ, Christians will help him in every other way; but the sinner has too much weighing him down to be able to render spiritual help to others, or even to render acceptable praise and prayer until his own deep need is first attended to. Christian service by priests—*i.e.* all Christians—but by them alone.

19 describes the preparation and use of another symbolic purifier. The ashes of the whole heifer, with cedar, hyssop, and scarlet, seem important; the running water was apparently just the medium for **sprinkling** them. The ceremony included washing the clothes, bathing, and being sprinkled with the ashes in water.

Deuteronomy $5^{2,3}$. Moses was addressing a generation, some of whom had been children at Horeb, while others were then unborn. Yet he declared that the **covenant** was not only with the dead fathers, but with their sons and with the future generation too. It was essentially national, and each lad was brought into it by his father's deed in circumcising him, irrespective of the lad's will. Anybody could in after years break it, and deliberately or unwittingly be cut off from the

People, lapsing into the mass of heathendom. And any foreigner like Hobab, Caleb, or Ruth could deliberately enter it, and voluntarily take the pledge of service to Jehovah. Yet the rule was, that the covenant was for the nation, and not for the individual. It was ratified once for all, and no fresh ratification was required from, or on behalf of, after generations or separate persons, although after generations could make fresh covenants for themselves, Deut 29, Neh 9. The nation, in fact, was individual, regarded as a whole incapable of division.

There is, then, nothing here for a Christian to get personal suggestions from; any typical allusion is to The Church universal. Jesus Christ once for all ratified the New Covenant at Calvary, and thereby founded His Church, into which persons are brought one by one by their new birth at conversion; but for them separately no sacrifice is needed at initiation. Each must look back to Calvary, where Jehovah made the covenant, not with the first disciples alone, but with us, even us, who are here alive to-day.

5^{6-21}. The marks of **nationality** are even stronger in this recapitulation of the ten commandments than in the original. The motive for keeping the first is that Jehovah freed them from bondage in Egypt; for keeping the fourth, "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day"; for keeping the fifth, that their days might be long and happy in Canaan. The orders then were given to Israel, and the only motives mentioned are such as appealed to Israel alone. The rules are good, but they are not

binding on us because they were binding on Israel; unless adopted and re-enacted by our Lord, they have less to do with us than the customs of our forefathers and the laws of our country.

13^{1-4}. Even miracles were not to authenticate a prophet who announced anything contrary to the **fundamental truths** already given. Any new doctrine or sect to-day may commend itself by marvellous growth, by wonderful cures or "spiritualist" manifestations; but if its tendency is to give Christ anything but the central position, it is out of harmony with fundamental truth, and has certainly exaggerated its importance, even if it enshrine any truth at all. Not even a miracle-working Church has the right to abrogate any of Christ's commands.

14^{21}. Restrictions were laid on Israelites that were not binding on others, and they might even approve others doing what they themselves might not. We have no right to try to **impose Christian standards** of living on those who make no pretence to be Christians; they will only be disgusted, will feel constraint, and learn to hate Christ, in whose name they find their liberty abridged. We may see no pleasure in races, or in excursions on Sunday; but unless we can find good warrant in the will of Christ, express or implied, it is not only an error of tactics, but an unjustifiable encroachment on our neighbours' liberty, or an unjustifiable lording over their conscience, to aim at legislation forbidding such recreations on the plea that they are unsuitable for Christians. The plea that every one needs one day in seven for rest is humanitarian, and fit to be urged upon all men.

Joshua 22. Considering that sacrifices might only be offered in one place, and that an altar was inevitably

associated with sacrifice and nothing else, the Reubenites and Gadites were badly advised in making their monument in such a form. It inevitably excited suspicion of their motives, and it remained as a lasting temptation to use it.

A like blunder is made when people forget that the only **Christian altar** was the cross, and the only place of atoning sacrifice was Calvary. To make a piece of ecclesiastical furniture altar-form, and to call it an altar, to talk about repeating the sacrifice, is inevitably to raise suspicion as to motive or understanding, and to pave the way for neglect of the one effectual offering, and for introduction of irrelevant and distracting rites. Then to express a verbal wish for unity seems in flagrant contradiction with the actual conduct.

Judges 8^{27}. The very man who began by attacking idolatry soon heedlessly afforded it fresh encouragement. Luther threw off the yoke of Rome and laid another on German necks. Devising **forms of worship** that have no countenance in the New Testament may become a snare to all, and wean them from that worship which should be in spirit and in truth.

11^{39}. In primitive society a father was given great control over his family, and was allowed to vow or dedicate his children without consulting them; Hannah and Samuel afford another illustration. It was not till the times of Jeremiah and Ezekiel that **individuality** was allowed much play, and it was reserved for our Lord to proclaim the full liberty and value of each separate person. However bound a man is to afford his child every advantage of home influence, school education, church surroundings, he has no right to forestall the child or to deprive him of the right to decide for himself as to his spiritual life; nor does the

New Testament afford any example of such parental interference. Things may be given or dedicated, men and women must give themselves.

17^{5-12}. Micah appointed two men successively to be his priest, and neither appointment was a success: a true appointment could be made by God alone. Men to-day may declare another "Christian," but unless God has called him, the ceremonies are empty: this is true whether they be sprinkling, or confirmation, or first communion, or immersion.

17^{13}. Micah rejoiced in having a Levite, and such a Levite as the grandson of Moses, to be his priest; and the priest turned out weak-kneed and ungrateful. **Apostolic succession** is not much good unless there come first the change of heart.

I Kings 6. The Tyrian artists decorated the temple with carvings of cherubs, oxen, and lions, not mentioned in I Ch 28 as Divinely appointed, but not intended as a breach of the second commandment; and they erected two pillars of bronze, glorified editions of the pillars which the people had covenanted to destroy, Ex 23^{24}. It may well be that these adornments were at first regarded as innocently as they were intended. But within a generation Jeroboam set up a golden ox for worship, and throughout Rehoboam's realm there were pillars on every high hill. So dangerous is it to **set aside an explicit order**, however obsolete it may seem. It may seem a light thing to neglect the command, "Drink ye all of it," and to confine the cup to ministers; but it fosters an absurd idea of their special sanctity, and can only be justified by an appeal to irrelevant authority or a distortion of doctrine. It may seem a light thing to disuse immersion and substitute pouring or sprinkling, against which there is no explicit

order; but it cuts away a dramatic illustration of the truths of total depravity and thorough cleansing, and paves the way for disbelief in these doctrines. It may seem a light thing to fly in the face of the Lord and call certain men "Father," but the disobedience has brought about the very evils of pride and tyranny that He foretold.

12^{31}. Jeroboam invented a **novel ritual**, or lent his patronage to the old heathen ritual expressly forbidden, and so paved the way to sheer apostasy. The adoption of the old pagan practices of Greece and Rome, altars, sprinkling, vestments, etc., confused the popular mind in the Dark Ages, and led downward, through saint-worship, which with many was merely disguised idolatry, to the polished atheism and dilettantism of the early Renaissance.

Jeroboam neglected the directions as to **priests** being those born in a certain line, and instituted others. Christians, the priests of the New Covenant, are those who have experienced the new birth and are children not of Adam, but of God; to call others Christians, whatever the qualifications of their parents, is without scriptural warrant, and leads to misunderstanding.

II Chronicles 26^{16-20}. Service in the sanctuary was the privilege of the priests alone. Uzziah had served God in his own sphere, as conqueror, fortifier, lover of husbandry, in everything seeking God and guided by a prophet. Yet all this gave him no title to the highest service of all, directly religious.

Still, it is true: a man may be a great general, statesman, teacher, and may deserve honour for the benefits he confers on his country; but if he is **no Christian**, his joining in Christian worship is a hollow pretence, his consorting with Christians and behaving

as one of them calls for faithful dealing and a reminder that God cares for no formal honour from those whose hearts are not yielded to Him. Any one may be called by God to the lofty privilege and duty of priesthood; there is no limitation to one human family: any one born of the Spirit is thereby eligible, but must openly come and take up his new birthright. Until a man has felt this spiritual regeneration and has avowed it openly in the sight of men, it is cruel to allow him to assume fellowship with Christians, only to be in the last day expelled for ever by the great High Priest, who, with all His tenderness, will yet have to say, "Depart, I never knew you."

Ezra 2^{62}. Under the law of Num 3^{10} the priesthood was confined to the sons of Aaron, and the mere failure to prove undoubted descent now excluded these men. **Christian priests** are those who are children of God through Christ Jesus. If that relationship cannot be proved, a man's standing as a Christian may well be doubted or denied; the simple test is given by John, "Every one that loveth is begotten of God."

If any rule like this held as to the **Christian ministry**, we might invite a pretender to **apostolic succession** to produce a list of his consecrators right up to the apostles; and as no single man can do this, the doctrine becomes unpractical. But in reality there is no passage nor combination of passages in the New Testament that asserts the necessity for any continuity of officers. See comment on II Tim 2^{2}.

3^{3-6}. First the sacrifice, then the raising of the temple. First the atonement on Calvary, then the foundation of The Church.

4^{1-3}. These "adversaries" were a mixed race, partly Israelite, partly immigrant; their religion was mixed,

partly Jehovistic, partly Babylonian. The Jews saw that if they would not reform before they were accepted as helpers, they themselves would be dragged down to the local level, and would repeat the gradual apostasy of the northern kingdom.

Reunion may be dearly purchased if it involve sinking our convictions and tolerating practices which we regard as contrary to God's revealed will. It is quite possible to co-operate for many ends without discarding from our churches any ordinance of Divine institution, or admitting what experience shows to tend towards driving it out and supplanting by something else. If the desire for union will not produce reform, actual association after union is not likely to, either in marriage or in church relations.

7^{21-26}. Here is State endowment and **State establishment** of a church. The State, however, did not draw up the law of the church. The reforming Jews codified this themselves; the State simply gave it an authority equal to the law of the king. We know from other sources that the Persian kings, while themselves Parsees, were tolerant of most religions, and allowed the practice of other rituals, often supporting them from the State treasury, and exempting the priests from taxes. In our phrase, they practised concurrent endowment, as in France to-day. It is perhaps possible that such a scheme could be worked without hardship or injustice, allowing every religious body freedom of thought and worship, whether Hindu, Moslem, Protestant, Catholic, Mormon, or spiritualist. It is perhaps possible to distribute public money equitably between these different bodies. But it is clear that such a conception of the functions of the State is wide, and that much trouble would be saved by laying

fewer taxes and stopping the State subscriptions. And as the tendency is strong to seek for control in return for help, churches which accept such help must always be in danger of encroachments on their self-government. Civilized countries like America and Australia have laid it down as fundamental in their politics that churches shall not be thus interwoven with the State, that church property ranks with business property unless used for purely religious purposes, that ministers of religion have no status higher than other citizens,—indeed, may be subject to disabilities,—and that churches are like other voluntary associations, subject to their own rules. However, the question of the relations of a Christian church is to be settled on principles laid down by Christ, and not merely by considerations of expediency.

Nehemiah 8, 10, 13. Here is the beginning of the transition from the old congregation of Jehovah to the **Synagogue**. The change was due to a priest who, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, was not content with his ritual duties. Having no direct inspiration to preach, Ezra was moved to publish the ancient history, customs, and preaching contained in "The Book of Moses," 13[1]. He was a **scribe**, but not like Seraiah, the official secretary of David, nor like Baruch, the disciple and secretary of Jeremiah. He had returned from Babylon with The Law of his God in his hand, and was proud to style himself, The scribe of the words of the commandments of Jehovah. So he was the forerunner of Bible students and theologians.

It was due to him that the **Book of The Law** was henceforth not the private property of the priests, but the common property of the laity. The reading of The Law for a whole week on this occasion set a new

fashion, and soon it was read regularly every week, and taught daily to every child. This popularizing the word of God was unpopular with the priests, who found their professional importance lessened. In all these transactions the name of the high priest never occurs; the prominent men are Nehemiah, the lay governor of low extraction, and the Levites, who under the temple regulations had such menial tasks assigned to them, and would be glad of an opportunity for more spiritual service. Temple and synagogue were rivals from the first. Sacerdotalism and Bible study have little in common.

The Law was in the ancient local language, which the people were already abandoning, 13^{24}; Greek and Aramaic were soon rivalling it, and by our Lord's day had quite displaced it from current use. Yet the local scribes never adjusted themselves to this fact further than that they allowed the schoolmaster to give a running oral translation as The Law was publicly read. A written vernacular translation they forbade. To put the Bible within the reach of the humblest is often the work of a priest or a scribe; but always he earns the hatred of his own class, as Wyclif, Denk, Hetzer, Luther, and Tyndale found. And in the inertia of the later scribes we see the risk that every reform shall stereotype and impose a new tradition as bad as the old, deserving our Lord's denunciation, Luke 11^{52}.

The Prophets were the preachers of their day, which was nearly over by the time of Ezra. They were not necessarily drawn from the priesthood, nor from the educated classes, and they abhorred being confounded with mere professional teachers, Amos 7^{10-17}, Zech 13^{1-6}. They had no hereditary succession, nor did a disciple succeed his master; each was called directly

and independently by God. They felt deeply the responsibility of their position, for which they needed constant Divine help, Jer 1^{4-10}; and they were keenly alive to the dangers of sloth and routine, Isa 56^{10-12}, Ezek 13, Micah 3. They could see the advantage in orderly worship, and borrow the vocabulary and imagery of their ancestral rites to depict the glory of the days when all nations should serve Jehovah, Isa 19^{19}, 66^{19-21}. They did not object to true, heartfelt religious devotion expressing itself in fit ceremony, Joel $1^{13, 14}$, 2^{15-17}; but they all insisted on the emptiness of ritual apart from genuine worship with the spirit and understanding; and though some of them were priests, they often denounced the vain ceremonialism that replaced true religion, Isa 1^{10-17}, 58^{1-7}, 66^{1-4}; Jer 7, $9^{25, 26}$; Ezek 23^{39}; Hosea 8^{11-13}, 12^{11}—13^{3}; Amos $4^{4, 5}$, 5^{21-25}; Micah 6^{6-8}. In Jonah and Isa 42 onwards, there are signs that the promise to Abraham was not forgotten, and that the mission of Israel to the world was not revoked. Thus there is much in the prophetic books that is typical of Christ's Church. A short selection from their writings was read in synagogue each Sabbath, and the Christian preachers found their best texts here, Luke 4^{17}; Acts 2^{16}, 7^{42-52}, 8^{30}, 13^{27}, 15^{15}.

Ezekiel 36^{25}. This is the only passage in the Bible where we read of **sprinkling** clean water; the usual substances sprinkled were oil, blood, or the ashes of a heifer, etc., in water.

The passage is figurative, not literal. Ezekiel often compared Israel to a woman faithless to her husband, Jehovah. He here varied the image, and likened her to a woman technically unclean, declaring that Jehovah for His own honour would pardon and cleanse her both technically and really. In working out the

imagery, he referred to the ritual of cleansing a woman in her separation. Singularly enough, while Lev 15 describes many kindred rituals, this precise case is not dealt with. Though analogy would point to a bath and a washing of the clothes, this passage suggests a mere sprinkling. The literal meaning of the prediction follows at once. The nation was to be radically changed, imbued with love to God evinced by obedience, and restored from exile to prosperity in Palestine.

If the prediction is to suggest anything further to us, the most obvious interpretation is that if The Church apostatize from Christ, yet as the gates of Hades cannot prevail against it, Christ will for His own honour rehabilitate and purify it. We may narrow the application from a body to an individual, and find the suggestion that if a Christian despise his privileges, sin, and be punished, yet Christ will not cast him off for ever, but for His own honour will raise him again. Such teaching has countenance in John 6^{39}, $17^{11,12}$; I Cor 1^{9}; II Tim 2^{13}.

But this passage has no reference, direct or indirect, to the original call of Israel, of The Church, or of an individual. It deals with the recall of an apostate. To connect it with the first conversion of a sinner is to miss its meaning; to connect it with the dedication of an infant is to neglect every suggestion in the passage; and to infer that a particular rite under the Old Covenant, of which there is no other mention at all, is to be transferred bodily to modern times, applied to a baby instead of a woman, and altered in its meaning, is an amazing piece of interpretation.

Malachi 1^{11}. The prophet was concerned with the neglect of worship, and was urging the people to

support their national ritual. Priests and laymen alike went wearily through their duties, showing a meanness about their offerings that compared badly with the growing reverence for Jehovah among the nations of the world. That this was a fact may be recognized from Ezra 7^{17}, and it is in accord with the hopes of other prophets, Isa 60, $66^{20, 21}$. The language, however, is so strong that some treat it as a prediction, and Romanists claim that it is fulfilled in their offering the sacrifice of the mass in many lands. This, however, emasculates the passage and robs it of its force as spoken to the Jews. Moreover, the offerings here spoken of were at most gifts and tribute, as contrasted with atoning sacrifices. The sacrifice of Christ was pre-eminently atoning and incapable of repetition. The sacrifice of the mass is intended to recall and repeat this offering of the body and blood of the Lord, yet is called an unbloody sacrifice!

NOTES ON ALL PASSAGES IN THE

NEW TESTAMENT

DEALING WITH THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

I will build My Church

All authority hath been given unto Me

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another

Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things

When He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, He sat down on the right hand of God

Ye are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices

MATTHEW

MATTHEW $3^{1,7,8}$. John took up the message of the older prophets: Repent ye; and like them he had to warn against the impossibility of combining a **formal religiosity** with an immoral life. He laid the stress, however, not on abandoning evil, but on doing good. Since the days of Malachi there had been a great change in the outward forms of religion. The local sacrifices were abandoned, but the priestly aristocracy at Jerusalem had developed into Sadducees. A democratic system of schooling made opportunity for scribes or teachers of The Law in every village. An exclusive order of brethren pledged to strict observance of The Law was known as the Pharisees, and had novices and sympathisers throughout the land: and thus there were as many vested interests opposed to reform as ever, with new substitutes for the one thing always sought, purity of life and obedience to God.

$3^{5,6}$. In face of these organized parties with their ceremonies, John took the hint and began a loose sort of organization of those who were his most ardent followers; and since all the customs of the nation and of existing parties included an **initiation**, he, too, initiated those who pledged themselves to repentance and good deeds. The form of the rite was already familiar, though with a slightly different meaning. A priest at consecration was bathed, Ex 40^{12}, Lev 8^{6}; a man who

was unclean in certain ways had to bathe himself, Lev $14^{8,9}$, 15^{5-27}, $16^{26,28}$, 17^{15}. A Gentile convert to Judaism was "immersed completely, so that every part of the body was touched by the water," Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," II 745—747. The custom of bathing was and is almost necessary in warm climates, and abundant provision was made for it in the towns of Palestine, as may be read in Josephus or seen in Jerusalem to-day. Washing was an obvious symbol of purifying the heart and conduct, Isa 1^{16}, and a total washing or immersion tallied well with the truth that "the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint, from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it," Isa $1^{5,6}$. So the act was familiar, and its meaning familiar. The innovations were slight, that John bathed them instead of their bathing themselves, suggestive that it did not lie in their own power to reform, and that help from outside was needed; and that he bathed them once for all to initiate them, and so read a deeper meaning into the cleansing, making them attach greater importance to their repentance, which was to be lasting.

The act of baptism is here assumed to be **immersion**, for the following reasons:—

i. There was no Jewish religious rite that involved pouring water or sprinkling pure water on anybody. John may of course have invented a new rite, but there is no proof that he did; all the allusions make it improbable, and any alteration would have made it less suitable to his preaching.

ii. The Greek word *baptizo* is derived from another, *bapto*, as to whose meaning, Dip, Immerse, there is no dispute; and the alteration does not imply any weakening of the act.

iii. While many words which had a well-established meaning in the polished literary language of Athens acquired another in the spoken language of Alexandria and Syria, there is no evidence that any such change occurred in this case.

iv. The word is employed in the Septuagint, the standard Greek translation of the Old Testament used in John's day by all Jews speaking Greek, of Naaman dipping himself in Jordan, II Kings 5^{14}. Other translations use it in Ps 9^{15}, the nations are sunk down; in Ps 69^{2}; and in Ecclesiasticus 34^{25}, referring to the bathing after touching a dead body, ordered in Num 19^{19}. It is claimed indeed that Judith 12^{7} indicates a weakened meaning, for no woman would dare strip and bathe in a fountain within the camp. It might be replied that in real life a decent woman would hardly go out of a tent after nightfall to wash in any way at such a fountain; that no woman would really meet the respectful treatment Judith is represented as receiving; that as to this very incident it is expressly said that Holofernes commanded his guards not to stay her. But the way in which the author both despised probability and indicated the nature of her ablutions is shown in 10^{3}. Though in the city "the cisterns were emptied, and they had not water to drink their fill for one day," 7^{21}, she had no difficulty when she "washed her body all over with water." Need we suppose he meant less when he Pharisaically represented her as going out every night into the valley of Bethulia and immersing herself at the fountain of water in the camp? Thus in every case when the word is used in the Greek Bibles, its meaning seems unchanged.

v. All the passages in secular Greek writers before

and about the time of John, who use the word literally and not metaphorically, give excellent sense with the same meaning.

vi. There is no single passage in the New Testament that proves any change to have occurred in the meaning of the word; there are several that are weakened in force if any wider and shallower meaning is attached to it; and there are some which are incapable of bearing any other meaning than the old one of Dip, Immerse. Each will be discussed in its place.

vii. In early Christian literature, directions are given for baptism. The so-called "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" directs to baptize in running water, or, if that is impossible, to baptize in standing water, or, if that is impossible, to pour water on the head. This shows plainly that pouring was not baptism, but only a substitute for it: the words Baptize, Pour, are contrasted.

viii. Early Christian custom shows no variation in the meaning. We are not aware of any customary deviation for two centuries. When this did arise, in a land where the word "baptize" was foreign, the Greek historian queries whether a man, around and over whom water had been poured, could be said to be "baptized."

ix. The modern Greeks attach no other meaning to the word, though it is no longer in daily use for the ordinary act of dipping. It is now confined to the church ceremony, and all the churches in communion with the Greek church still attach to this Greek word the meaning of Dip or Immerse. Most of them not only order immersion, but practise it.

x. In view of these facts, it is not to be wondered at that the Greek word is in every dictionary declared

to have as its first and principal meaning, to Dip, Immerse, Submerge, Merge, Overwhelm; and that no Greek dictionary attributes to it such meanings as Pour, Sprinkle.

The above reasons cannot be counterbalanced by any evidence that the churches have not uniformly practised immersion. They are ample to prove that when John instituted baptism, when our Lord enjoined it, when the apostles practised it, when the New Testament evangelists and apostles wrote, Baptism meant Immersion and nothing else. Whether the churches did well in changing is another question, which is negatived by other considerations of obedience and symbolism, but is not discussed at this point.

3[11]. John here contrasted his own water-baptism with the **spirit baptism** to be given by the Messiah. The same contrast was drawn by our Lord just before His ascension, Acts 1[5], and by Peter at Cæsarea, Acts 11[16], and less distinctly by Paul at Ephesus, Acts 19[4]. It is clear that John's baptism was so far from being a means of regeneration that it is contrasted with it.

It is important to see that water-baptism, under the auspices of Christian teachers, even apostles, after the resurrection of our Lord, was viewed in much the same way. On the day of Pentecost the Spirit descended on the disciples irrespective of any baptism performed on them. There is no record as to the sequence of events in the case of the converts, and no conclusion can justly be drawn from the silence. But at Samaria we know that some long interval elapsed between the baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit, Acts 8[16]; and at Cæsarea the Spirit came upon Cornelius and his friends before baptism, Acts 10[47].

Further, whenever we do read of a ceremony preceding the gift of the Spirit, it is not baptism, but the **laying on of hands** by a Christian. Peter and John at Samaria, Ananias at Damascus, Acts 9[17], Paul at Ephesus, Acts 19[6], are good illustrations. If the doctrine were at all credible that a spiritual result could be achieved by material means, we might be tempted to frame a dogma not of baptismal regeneration, but of Regeneration by the Imposition of Hands. Fortunately we are guarded against this by the fact that our Lord never ordered any such ceremony.

3[15]. The Pharisees aimed at fulfilling all righteousness, but unhappily centred their attention on trifles and externals, losing sight of the essentials of sincerity and honesty. Our Lord had the same aim, and was the only Jew who succeeded in keeping The Law.

4[17]. **The Kingdom** of heaven, or of God, 6[33], is an idea that became prominent first in Dan 2[44], 7[18–27], though hinted at in Obad [21] and celebrated by psalmists. The popular notion was that God would replace the Roman empire by a Jewish kingdom, with Jerusalem as its capital and Israel as its privileged citizens. Though John the Baptist may have had more spiritual ideas, the use of this phrase by him, or by Christ, or by apostles, often aroused misconception, not only among foes, Luke 17[20], 23[2]; John 18[37], 19 [12–15]; Acts 17[7], but also among friends, Luke 19[11], John 6[15], 12[13]; Acts 1[6]. Yet in face of this obvious risk, our Lord adopted the phrase habitually, though decisively rejecting the political implications, Luke 17[21], John 18[36]. With Him it seems to denote a state of society in which God is supreme, a state about to be introduced, 12[28], 21[43]; Mark 1[15], 9[1]; Luke 21[31, 32], but not yet made universal and complete, 25[34], 26[29]. In the near future

there should be new moral ties of men to God and among themselves; in the remote future there should be a realization of the eternal plan that God alone should rule, and all obey Him. Thus all the saved, Jew or Gentile, before or after Christ, knowing Him on earth or not, infant or intelligent, may be regarded as citizens of the kingdom, Eph 2^{13-19}, Ph 3^{20}.

5^{17-20}. Our Lord paid the most scrupulous deference to that **Law** to which He had chosen to subject Himself in being born a Jew. He had not come to destroy it, or to detract from the reverence it received from all Jews, but, on the contrary, to **fulfil** it down to the least detail, and meantime to encourage in other Jews a like obedience.

The Law was written in three or four portions, embedded in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; its foundation is to be read in Ex 19—24. It was represented by God as the human conditions of a covenant, whose Divine side was that He would hold Israel as His own possession—a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. This contract had indeed been broken on the human side in every generation, and the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel had seen that a better one was necessary; yet it was allowed to stand as an offer, so that any generation might seek to fulfil it, and thus become entitled to the corresponding advantages. Our Lord set Himself deliberately to fulfil it, and not only for Himself personally, but for the whole nation representatively. He was the Seed long foretold, the King of the Jews able to act for all the people. Once fulfilled for all, the advantages would accrue to Him representatively, and He could admit to a share in them whomsoever He chose. Moreover, the way would be cleared for the offer of

a new covenant based on better promises. But at this present stage in His ministry the great thing was to bring about a deeper respect for The Law, which by the common people was neglected, John 7^{49}; while some others evidently set aside some precepts, and by their example and teaching declared them trivial or abrogated or obsolete; and the Pharisees, while aiming at complete fulfilment, had yet a distorted and disproportionate view of it, which combined with inevitable human fallibility to work out a very incomplete righteousness. He therefore announced that till He had accomplished all that was ordained in The Law, the whole was to be held as the rule of conduct for every Jew; and He proceeded at once to use some of its precepts as the basis of even more stringent demands.

5$^{21—39}$. Here one of the very ten commandments was taken and declared to be inadequate as it stood. It only dealt with accomplished facts, not with expressed intentions nor with harboured purpose. So working on the line suggested by the tenth commandment, the new laws of the kingdom were evolved from the old law of the covenant. Similarly, another commandment was made only a particular case of a more general law, and two restrictions were made more stringent. A climax was put to this legislation by the utter abrogation of one precept; yet not in the Pharisaic fashion, but still by ending the license which the precept had only abridged. Similarly, another was declared not to go far enough, and a number of precepts breathing a spirit of hatred to enemies were replaced by one in a loftier spirit of love.

Yet with all this free and authoritative criticism of parts of The Law, even its centre and core, every

advance is on lines hinted at in that Law; and the new law of Jesus Christ, uttered to His disciples, was based upon or evolved from that older Law given to them of old time. There was no clean sweep, no contemptuous disregard of it as antiquated and beneath notice, no ignoring of it as the Roman law was ignored; but a careful utilization of it both in letter and in general trend, and a warning that it still held, while Jesus made the only successful attempt to keep it and fulfil it.

When we note this, we need not fear to recognize the Divine skill wherewith The Law had been adapted to the immaturity of the people, while yet we no more adopt it as our rule of life than we lay aside manly things to busy ourselves with our childish occupations. The eternal essence of it is expressed by the Lawgiver here: Whatever we wish men to do to us, do to them. Such is the only law under which we live, though it may be expanded and applied to countless details. To blend with it extracts from the older Law of the Jews is to take on ourselves needless obligations which we are not asked to assume, and which may very likely distract us from those duties we are asked to discharge, even if they do not at times conflict with them.

7^{21-23}. Not deeds alone, nor success in the ministry, but motives, will be the test of ministers.

8^{1-4}. For comment see Luke 5^{12-14}.

9^{2}. For comment see Luke 5^{18-26}.

9^{16-17}. For comment see Luke 5^{36}.

9^{18-25}. According to the rules of uncleanness, the woman touching the garment did not matter; but our Lord's touching the dead girl made Him unclean for a week, Num 19^{11}, and so debarred him from certain religious worship. Doubtless He "fulfilled all right-

eousness," in view of His declaration that He would not break one of the least commandments, and of His order to the cleansed leper to obey the law in his case.

11[2–5]. The reality of a man's call by God is sometimes doubted by those who stand in a priestly succession, even if they also hold a direct Divine commission themselves. The test is not likeness of a man's work to the expectations formed of it, but the good accomplished to body and soul by his ministry.

11[25–27]. In connection with His despatch of preachers, His own proclamation of a new era, and the general indifference, He asserted His authority on earth as supreme, and offered a yoke that is easy.

12[1–8]. For comment see Mark 2[23–28].

12[9–14]. For comment see Mark 3[1–6].

12[30]. Compare Mark 9[38–40].

15[1–6]. Issue was taken on the binding force of **tradition**. Our Lord did not expressly say whether deductions and inferences from The Law were binding, but He did say that no inference could be valid which conflicted with a plain direction. To make a pretended vow of goods to God, retaining the use of them, but exempting them from liability for the support of parents, would be ingenious, but an evasion of a clear order.

So is settling money on wife or children to evade the payment of debt; so is giving property to a church and taking back a long lease of it to escape rating. Possibly such practices originated in praiseworthy motives, but they have long since degenerated, and they drug the conscience.

We see other species of the same evil when traditions, even of centuries' standing, are allowed to override express orders as to spiritual worship, as to the brotherhood of all Christians and fatherhood of none,

as to the complete sufficiency of the one atoning sacrifice.

And however true it is that the **children of believers** have, by virtue of their parentage and education, splendid opportunities of hearing and accepting the offer of salvation, it is only tradition that bestows on them some indefinite status by virtue of their christening when infants, and it makes of very little effect the word of God that righteousness comes by belief of the heart, and salvation by confession with the mouth, or that every one stands or falls to his own Lord.

16[18]. "Upon **this rock** I will build." The metaphor of building was often used in scripture to express God's forming a community: I Sam 2[35] for a priesthood; II Sam 7[27], I Kings 11[38], Amos 9[11] for a dynasty; Jer 18[9], 31[4], 42[10] for a nation. Our Lord expanded it in a new way harmonious with His own general allusion, 7[21], emphasizing as fundamental that He required Himself to be appreciated as the Jewish ideal, the Son of God.

This variation of metaphor was not taken by the apostles as standard. While they always insisted on the need for such a faith, they did not express it in this language. Paul adopted the older thought of Isa 28[16], that God laid in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone of sure foundation, and identified this foundation with Christ, I Cor 3[11]. Once he varied it by mentioning God's agents, who proclaimed Jesus as the Christ, and so laid the foundation, Eph 2[20]. Peter himself, who had at first repeated our Lord's own use of Ps 118[22], combined the two images and represented Him as at once foundation, corner-stone, and coping-stone, 1 Pet 2[6, 7]. John's vision was simpler and nearer to Paul's conception,

emphasizing those who laid the foundation, Rev 21[14]. The closest resemblance to our Lord's usage is in Heb 6[1], where repentance and faith are spoken of as a foundation.

The two figures are complementary. Old Testament prophet, psalmist, and apostles dwelt upon Christ Himself; Christ and New Testament prophet upon the attitude to be assumed towards Him. Either is valueless apart from the other.

"My Church." This is the first place where the word **Church**, Ecclesia, occurs in the Bible. What did our Lord mean by it? A Greek would understand that the Ecclesia of his city was a select body charged with the duties of protecting neighbours and dependents, of administering the affairs of the community both at home and abroad, of training younger members of the households to assume responsibilities at the proper time. To the purely political meaning a Jew would add a religious tinge, derived from the use of the word in the Greek scriptures, for Israel in assembly as God's people, Acts 7[38]; and whereas Greeks knew many Ecclesias in different cities, the Jew knew only one people of God. The Greek Ecclesia was sharply distinguished from the general population of the city, Acts 19[39–41]; the Jewish Ecclesia or congregation also was distinguished from the mixed multitude that hung on to its fringe, Ex 12[38], from the strangers alongside it, Ex 12[47, 48], and from its own dependents, Josh 9[27]. Those, then, who heard this word from Christ's lips would think of a select body, called out from the general mass for religious purposes, and distinguished by special duties.

It was further defined as Christ's Church, and as a body based on a recognition that Jesus of Nazareth

was the longed-for Messiah and Son of God. These two marks both show that it was a body still in the future; and this is confirmed by the phrase, I will build, not, I am building. There might be persons already living who were destined to hold prominent place, but as yet they were not fitted, nor gathered, nor organized. The temple was built of stones shaped in the quarry, but the building did not begin till they were assembled and arranged. Though David bought the site, conceived the idea, accumulated materials, furnished designs, yet the temple was called after the man who laid the foundation and executed the purpose, Solomon. The Church of Christ may have been planned from all eternity, but its actual rearing could only begin when He purchased it with His blood.

There was another reason why it could not begin sooner. Though Peter's faith leaped out to greet Jesus as Messiah and Son of God, he could only hope to convince others that He was Lord and Christ after the resurrection, Acts 2[22—36]. Jesus, whom they crucified, who in the noontide of His days went into the gates of Hades, was not left there, for God raised Him up. The gates of Hades did not prevail against Him, so the apostles testified; and they at once proceeded to build on this foundation an equally imperishable Church. But until by the resurrection from the dead Jesus was declared to be the Son of God, Peter's faith must remain exceptional and beyond verification, John 20[24—28].

Paul recognized this historic beginning. In I Cor 12[28] he mentioned apostles, prophets, teachers, etc., in The Church, ignoring lawgivers and priests, who were very important before Christ. In Col 1[18] he referred to Christ as head of the body, The Church, the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. In Eph 2[20] he spoke of

the apostles and prophets as laying the foundation; and in Eph 3[10], after marvelling at the eternity of God's intention to admit Gentiles as fellow-members, he added that the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might learn from The Church the manifold wisdom of God, now.

In Heb. 12[22–24] separate groups are mentioned as objects of attraction, innumerable hosts of angels, the general assembly and Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and also the spirits of just men made perfect. Thus to the apostles and prophets of the New Covenant, The Church was a new body, founded since the resurrection, begun by Christ and themselves. Nor is there any passâge that conflicts with this conception.

The Church, then, is the whole body of people who in this life have known of and accepted Jesus as Saviour, and have placed themselves at His disposal for pardon, improvement, employment. It began to be gathered from the Resurrection, it will apparently be completed at the Second Advent, 16[27], 19[28], 24[30, 31]; Luke 12[37]; I Th 1[10], 3[13], 4[15–17]; I Cor 1[7], 11[26], 15[23]; Ph 3[20]; Heb 9[28]; I Pet 1[7], 5[4]. Meanwhile it cannot be assembled as a whole. The title should not be monopolized by a single living generation of Christians, still less by any section of it. Its use for a visible community is only warranted by Scripture in the case of a local assemblage, as at 18[17].

16[19]. **The kingdom of heaven** will contain other groups: infants who have never committed actual sin; heathen who have never heard on earth of the historic Jesus; just men like Abel, Enoch, and Abraham, who lived in faith; members of the chosen nation from Moses onward, besides those who have heard of and

accepted Jesus. The preparation of each group has been unique; is it probable that all are to be merged indiscriminately into one, and that God, who has appointed to every member of the body its own duty, will not assign to each group its appropriate service? Doubtless the saints before Christ had to await their forgiveness until the death of Christ, Rom 3[25], and cannot be made perfect apart from us, Heb 11[40]; but we lack proof that all distinctions whatever are to be abolished. In Rom 10[12] and Col 3[11] only believers since Christ are contemplated. But when the body is united to the Head, and Christ is complete in all His members, still there are others to be in subjection under His feet, Eph 1[22, 23]. When the Church is completely built for an habitation of God through the Spirit, Eph 2[22], I Pet 2[5], is this to be the only object in the universe? When the holy priesthood assembles with its High Priest, are there no others who need their service, I Pet 2[5, 9], Rev 21[24]—22[4]? When Christ takes His power and reigns over the Kingdom of God, is it not the glory of The Church as distinguished from mere subjects that we reign with Him, II Tim 2[12], I Pet 2[9], Rev 5[10]?

Two great promises were given to Peter. The former was distinctly personal, a reward of his having been the first to discern and proclaim the great truth of the Godship of Jesus. He should **open the kingdom** of heaven to all believers. As a matter of fact, he did. On the day of Pentecost he was chief speaker, and so Jews passed in through the door he unlocked. At Samaria it was he who laid hands on the converts of Philip, so that the Holy Spirit came upon despised Samaritans. At Cæsarea it was he who, greatly to his own surprise, was called in to use his third key and

admit Gentiles. And thus this promise and that of Acts 1[8] were fulfilled.

The second promise was originally equally personal. He should prohibit and he should permit, and his decision should be infallible in so far as he was true to Christ whom he had just confessed. This was not authority to legislate, but to judge; not to teach or to organize, but to apply teaching to special cases: such is clear from the contemporary use of the phrase **Bind and loose.** One of its most important applications would be to explain to perplexed people that their sins lay on them as a dead weight while unrepented of, but would be swept away as a cloud on their repentance. This authority our Lord had already put in force for Himself, 9[6], and He now extended it to Peter. No reason was obvious why it should be limited to him, and it soon was conferred also upon others, 18[18] and John 20[23].

17[1–8]. For comment see Mark 9[2–7].

18[1–10]. For the origin of this incident, see Mark 9[33–35]. The ambition of the disciples was contrasted with the trust and want of self-consciousness habitual with **children.** To regain this, not as a passing phase of character, but as a permanent stage, is to show readiness for the kingdom. If there were any likelihood that children could be preserved from doubt and selfishness, they might be welcomed into full Christian fellowship; but experience bids us pause and see. As for baptism of children, that, of course, follows the decision as to permanent conversion, but is not alluded to here.

18[17]. The word **church** here bears a slightly different meaning from that in 16[18], signifying evidently the local congregation, the group of believers accustomed

to associate in work and worship. It has been claimed that not only the select character is alluded to, but the fact that it was actually assembled. Although in Greek secular usage this was important, and though even the Hebrew usage held to it generally, the Christian usage was not invariable on the point. If the sense of an assembly is possible at Acts 5^{11}, it is impossible at Acts 8^{1-3}, where we read of Saul laying waste the church, entering into every house: clearly there were several houses for assembly, yet only one church. We can trace the word widening to include all believers in Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, Acts 9^{31}, narrowing to mean the local congregation which acted as one body, whether at Jerusalem or Antioch, Acts $11^{22, 26}$, while the brethren in Judæa ceased to be called one church, Acts 11^{29}. The thought of assembling together was by this time quite unimportant; though the church of Jerusalem prayed for Peter, it was in different groups, Acts $12^{5, 12, 17}$. Thenceforward the meaning settled down to the company qualified and accustomed to assemble, generally those of a town, occasionally those of a single household. Presently Paul widened it anew to embrace all believers in Christ, irrespective of space and time or assembling, and this meaning is most prominent in Ephesians. Most of the Christian usages are illustrated in a single chapter; a local body at Cenchreæ, several local congregations, a group in a single household, the whole community everywhere, Rom $16^{1, 4, 5, 16, 23}$.

18^{18}. The promise recently made to Peter was now bestowed on the disciples generally, and by implication upon all disciples of every age. All Christians, separately and together, are hereby charged with the duty of proclaiming the death of Christ, its value as the ground

of forgiveness, and the means of obtaining this, trust in Him: this is reiterated in John 20[22, 23].

It is a great gain that a representative conference of Anglican theologians at Fulham in December, 1901, unanimously agreed that these passages "are not to be regarded as addressed only to the Apostles or the Clergy, but as a commission to the whole **Church**, and as conveying a summary of the message with which it is charged."

18[15–20]. A plain direction to settle differences between Christians within the Christian circle, or to exclude him who travels outside it and brings the name of "brother" into ridicule. Such an assembly of brethren gathered in the spirit of Christ is assured of His presence and guidance, so that its decisions as to duty and liberty shall accord with God's. There is no hint that it should devolve its duties upon its officers.

In coming to any such decision the qualification is all-important, "in My name." Clearly a meeting swayed by temper and partizanship is out of the question. But it is sometimes forgotten that the Spirit of Christ has now guided thousands of congregations for centuries, and that experience has attested the wisdom and Divine authority of many decisions, and exposed the false character of some assemblies professing to act in His name. Thus a knowledge of Church history is a valuable guide to all who would counsel a congregation. And local errors may often be minimized by consulting the wisdom and experience of other congregations. The church at Corinth forgot this, and was sharply rebuked by Paul for its isolation, and bidden to remember that guidance was bestowed on other churches too, whose decisions and customs were entitled to respect, I Cor 7[17], 11[16], 14[33–36].

And it is certain that no assembly meeting in Christ's name can lay down anything conflicting with His own directions ; that were to again erect a tradition making God's word of no account. Moreover, His directions were given orally and directly by Himself, indirectly by the apostles both orally and in writing. So that the **New Testament** contains precepts and examples which are binding on every congregation at all times, and any local decisions must be on their general lines, applying their principles anew to fresh cases.

19[7, 8]. Here our Lord condensed the principle on which the Jewish Law was declared inadequate to indicate the morality He required. It was adapted to the state of the people in the days of Moses, but was not a full indication of God's will. It may still be a useful step upwards for heathen if for local and temporary reasons the immediate introduction of Christian customs is inexpedient. But for one trained in Christian customs to revert to the Jewish Law in whole or in part is to take a step downward, and this whether he adopts its lower morality or its fulfilled ritual.

19[13—15]. See Luke 18[15—17].

19[16—22]. The Law is an admirable help for self-examination, and if its precepts are expanded to cover words and thoughts, few will say, "All these things have I observed."

20[25—27]. Evidently there is no room among Christ's followers for elaborate hierarchies and domineering **officials**, even if bearing the lowly title Servant of servants. The devil's darling vice is the pride that apes humility. This needs to be borne in mind by those who bear the titles Minister and Deacon, which may by derivation mean Servant, but often imply by usage Ruler, in forgetfulness of these words.

21²³⁻²⁷. For comment see Mark 11²⁷⁻³³.

22¹⁵⁻²². The problem of the relation of **Church and State** was acute then. Few nations separated them. In early empires the customs varied. Babylon's kings carried off the idols of conquered peoples and suppressed their worship, as they did their self-government. Persia's kings permitted their subjects to worship as they pleased, and even subsidized some temples, though they themselves despised idolatry. Grecian kings wavered; the Syrians tried to suppress all worship but their own; the Egyptians allowed all local worship. The Romans had their own established religion, and exacted a yearly compliance with it from all their subjects, while tolerating their native customs and religion. The Jews, however, had learned rigid allegiance to Jehovah, and resisted the kings at Antioch and the governors at Cæsarea till they obtained special exemptions and were privileged nonconformists to the State religion. The position was very precarious, and constant conflicts arose, until forty years later the temple worship was suppressed violently and finally.

Our Lord was invited to pronounce on a trivial item, but He took a wide view, and implied that the functions of the State and the functions of the Church were quite separable and need not clash. Further than that He did not go in person, leaving it for His apostles to take another step. He declined to interfere with the functions of judges, Luke 12¹⁴, and He submitted to the authority of the Sanhedrin, Matt 26⁶¹; and while not admitting the unlimited authority of the Roman governor, Matt 27¹⁴, John 19⁸⁻¹¹, yet bowed to that power without whose exercise He could hardly accomplish His main object of redeeming the world.

Modern political economists say that the primary

function of government is to define and protect the rights of its subjects, and that the test of its secondary functions is expediency limited by morality. Thus they have been educated up to the point of allowing free play for the authority of Christ in His Church. Is it accidental that they agree almost exactly with Rom 13[1–7] and I Cor 6[12] ?

If in any given case Cæsar and God make conflicting claims, there is no room for hesitation ; Cæsar's authority is delegated from God, he outstrips his rights, his claim is unconstitutional, and God's must be obeyed, at whatever cost. But the obligation is cast on each Christian to decide for himself what the will of Christ is, with all study of the New Testament illumined by its Author, with all counsel from brother Christians : no congregation, no Church court, no Parliament, no law court, no confessor, no minister, can exempt him from the duty of decision. Then, if the rules of his denomination or church bid a minister do something which his conception of Christ's will forbids, he must try to alter the rules or else obey Christ, even if he must therefore lay down his office. If the law of the land exacts a rate for purposes which the ratepayer believes contrary to Christ's will, let him take joyfully the spoiling of his goods for Christ's sake.

22[34–40]. Two maxims are here singled out as condensing the essence of the whole Law and the teaching of the prophets. Both are contained in and quoted literally from The Law, but not from any conspicuous place therein. Indeed, the former is not exactly a law, but a sentence from a preface or an exhortation delivered when The Law was re-issued. And the latter originally referred to Jews only, and

was only explicitly widened by our Lord on a similar occasion, Luke 10$^{25-27}$. So that John, while acknowledging that it was in a sense an old commandment which they had from the beginning, yet declared that as now expounded it was essentially a new commandment. And the apostles, seizing it in this shape, declared it to be the distinctive law for the Christian, Jas 2^{8}, Gal 5^{14}, I Pet 1^{22}, Heb 13^{1,2}, I John 3^{11}. It is the same that our Lord stated in His own words, Matt 7^{12}, offering it as a summary of our duty.

23$^{8-12}$. The tendency to lordship and **tyranny** is too strong not to show itself inside Christian circles, so it was rebuked beforehand. There is no infallible teacher nor any guaranteed channel of orthodox tradition; all Christians are brethren and equally obliged to learn direct of Christ. There is no supremacy due to age, nor services, nor even success in soul-winning; these things demand respect and attention paid to any opinion; yet only such as may be paid to elder brothers, who are all equal as compared to the one heavenly Father. No one may lord it over the conscience of a brother, or the customs of a church, or the conduct of Christian work; Christ is the only Lord. He vests His authority in His Church, through which any officer receives what authority he has, and through which any officer may be deprived of that authority. If any man claim direct and independent authority, it rests on him to prove it by some display of power, as did Christ and the apostles.

23$^{13-36}$. The scribes and Pharisees were admitted by our Lord to be the proper guides, but their besetting sins were then exposed. Modern **ministers** can find here excellent hints for self-examination.

Ministers who are merely professional and are

obviously not true and hearty Christians, excite disgust in others that repels them even from Christ.

Ministers who are energetic evangelists, but do nothing much to train their converts, only fulfil half their duty, and will assuredly by example train their converts to be similarly one-sided.

Ministers who devote themselves energetically to winning over adherents from other branches of the Christian Church, excite dislike between those branches, and violate the first law of love, while their new adherents are tempted to lay more stress on the petty differences than on the great agreement.

Those who devote themselves to quibbling and hair-splitting come to lose the sense of the proportion of things. Those who are always playing with the question, How near can we go to a lie without lying? are sure to confuse the conscience of many and are likely to encourage lying.

Ministers who are ever exploring the Bible for some novel text or some byway of doctrine are too prone to neglect the vital themes that are constantly needed by the vast majority of hearers. A wise minister will set these in the forefront, and use the others as needed in Biblical proportion.

Ministers are often sorely tempted to deal lightly with some wrong in the church, and connive at its being hushed up, so that a fair front may be shown to outsiders. It is vain to cry Peace when there is no peace; vain to deal only with outward deeds and not deal with the corrupt heart.

Ministers whose own lives are open to such a charge, having the form of godliness without the power, are the worst hindrances to the gospel.

Many suffer from long sight, can recognize and

deplore the errors of the past, yet cannot learn from them to recognize and avoid kindred errors in the present.

24^{45-51}. Further warnings against clerical pride and sloth.

26^{26-28}. See comment on Mark 14^{12-25}.

$27^{50, 51}$. For comments see John 19^{30} and Mark 15^{38}.

28^{18}. It was not the first time our Lord had asserted at once His own **authority**, and that it was delegated. Soon after His first commission to the twelve, He said, "All things have been delivered unto Me by My Father." And in His great high-priestly prayer after taking leave of the twelve when the hour was come, He spoke of the Father having given Him authority over all flesh to bestow eternal life. At this juncture he reiterated this in ampler terms: having died and risen again, He now held all authority in heaven and on earth. It was this enlargement of dominion consequent on His atonement that enchained Peter, who declared that the crucified Jesus had been made Lord, and that through His resurrection angels and authorities and powers had been made subject to Him. When Paul applied to Jesus the words, "He put all things in subjection under His feet," it was of the dead and risen Jesus that he thought; and he expressly said that Christ died and lived again in order that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Paul coupled the resurrection again with the putting all things in subjection under Christ's feet, when writing to the Ephesians, and expressly told the Philippians that because of Christ's humbling Himself from equality with God to the death of the cross, therefore He was exalted that every tongue should call Him Lord.

It seems, then, that whatever His pristine power, He had voluntarily surrendered it, and now enjoyed it afresh as earned by tasting death for every man. And not only the old authority, but God "gave Him to be head over all things to The Church, which is His body." As His first act in this new capacity, after reciting afresh His authority, He constituted His followers a missionary society to win men to holiness, and to train recruits for this society, to which He gave perpetual succession. Any definition of The Church is utterly inadequate that does not put this purpose in the forefront, until more permanent purposes are revealed.

28[19, 20]. A curious ambiguity of grammar occurs here. The verbs are combined thus: Go and make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them. As a mere matter of grammar we can understand: Go and make disciples by baptizing them first and teaching them after; or, Go, Make disciples, then Baptize them, and Teach them afterwards. Many instances of both constructions may be cited even from the New Testament. But we need not debate the matter only as a question of grammar. John understood the order to be making and baptizing, John 4[1]. **Disciples** assuredly must be capable of learning, so much the very word implies: a disciple is not a person brought mechanically into the circle, but a person coming voluntarily. The direction, then, is first to get a general adhesion to Jesus, next to signalize that by dramatic action, then to unfold all that is implied in that adhesion. First win your scholar, then admit him to school, then teach him. First gain your recruit, then swear him in, then drill him. First convince of sin and of the existence of a Saviour, then obtain the public confession of sin and

the avowal of allegiance to the Saviour; then show how the Saviour gives the victory over sin.

The **baptism** now ordered differed in meaning from that of John. The Baptist had laid the stress on repentance and forgiveness as connected with his rite. He knew of a Messiah to come, sent by God, who should baptize in holy spirit; but his baptism was not directly concerned with the Messiah nor His work. Jesus now ordered that Christian baptism should be with reference to the Father, who, loving the world, planned its redemption; to the Son, who accomplished it and claimed obedience from His redeemed; to the Holy Spirit, soon to come and minister the benefits of redemption to those who accepted it. This was fuller and richer than had been granted to John to teach. John was the greatest of the prophets: but before the atonement was wrought out in fact and not only in symbol, before the Holy Spirit was despatched into the world for His age-long mission, John could only stand without and point onward; his preaching could only faintly suggest what now was unfolded; his ritual could only emphasize two points instead of the many and glorious facts henceforth associated with baptism by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The people who received this commission included the eleven disciples, but apparently numbered more than five hundred in all, as Paul tells; for that some of the eleven doubted at this stage is incredible, when a week after the resurrection all the eleven believed. The order, then, was not given to officers alone, but to all the faithful. The duties of evangelizing, of baptizing, of teaching are not limited to a few, but devolve **on every believer**, and are not to be discharged by

proxy; for of subsequent limitations scripture gives no trace.

These disciples received our Lord's direct commands to baptize, etc.; but it is more than doubtful if any one of them ever received Christian baptism. Those who are concerned about the fitness of the **administrator** find here a striking hiatus in their precedents. Yet for all subsequent cases it should be noted that the moment a disciple is made, baptism is enjoined before any further instruction is to be given, much more before any participation in Christian work or worship is to be offered. To this sequence all apostolic precedents conformed.

The commands of Jesus had been given orally to His disciples; some of the first generation committed them to writing, and some others, guided by the Holy Spirit, as promised, gave further directions in His name. All these are to be found gathered by later generations into one volume, the **New Testament**. As the Jews were bred on The Law, so are Christians to be trained on the New Testament.

Since the Jews had wandered far from their Law even while seeking to respect it, the promise to Jeremiah of a New Covenant with a law printed on the heart, with direct knowledge of God, was enlarged and beautified into a glorious promise of Christ's **constant presence** with His Church throughout the age. This is coupled with the orders, and its fulfilment may be felt in proportion as the orders are obeyed: it is the worker, the missionary, the teacher who has the most vivid realization of fellowship with his Saviour.

MARK

MARK 1^4. The repentance was with a view to the **remission of sins**. This was the old prophetic cry. John did not so far innovate as to substitute baptism for repentance, which would have introduced a new and soul-deadening ceremonialism; the baptism was only an act making it easier to believe that forgiveness did follow on the godly sorrow. The thought that baptism actually procured remission of sins is quite alien to all previous teaching, and is not involved in these words.

1^8. If any value were attached by the unthinking to the mere **ceremonial**, John did his best to indicate that the real efficient force was not outward, but inward, not imparted by himself, but by Jesus.

$1^{5, 8-10}$. The cases in verse ^{8} allow, the preposition in verse ^{5} suggests, and those in verses $^{9, 10}$ make certain, that the word **Baptize** had not changed its meaning, but that John immersed into water, out of which the candidate afterwards emerged. See note on Matt 3^5.

1^{40-45}. For comment see Luke 5^{12-14}.

2^5. For comment see Luke 5^{18-26}.

2^{10}. For comment see Matt 9^6.

2^{23-28}. The Pharisees did not object to the disciples taking the grain, which was expressly allowed, but to their plucking and rubbing it on **the sabbath**, for this

had been ruled to be work, and so forbidden by the fourth commandment. Our Lord did not contest their ruling; and indeed it seems plain that if picking and husking are not work, then a band of reapers and thrashers might be turned into the field on the sabbath. Our Lord tacitly admitted that the disciples were breaking the law, but He first quoted a precedent when hunger had set aside a mere ceremonial restriction, and then He expressly laid it down that necessity overrode this law too. The sabbath was meant as a gift and a blessing to man; man was not created to set aside a seventh of his time under all circumstances. If to do this meant to hunger, the sabbath was no blessing in that case, and the reason for its observance failed. Yet as it had been ordained by authority, therefore suspension, exposition, or annulling must be by authority too. He claimed that authority, even as He claimed authority to forgive sins.

A similar argument cannot apply to all cases. If the command in question had been, Thou shalt not steal, we cannot think that our Lord would have justified theft by His disciples, or would have claimed authority to annul or suspend the command. On the contrary, when He spoke on the Mount, He endorsed permanently such commands as, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God for falsehood, even adding to them yet more stringent requirements. When He tested the young ruler, He reminded him, Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honour thy father and mother. These rest on solid foundations, and while this world endures can never be suspended or annulled; they form part of that law which is written

in the heart and endorsed by conscience. It is hard to conceive what would convince us that a message purporting to be from God, bidding us defile the temple of the Holy Spirit, were not a lying message from Satan. But conscience does not so revolt against doing unusual work to relieve urgent need, even on a day which under ordinary circumstances is a day of rest and worship; rather, conscience would smite us if we allowed the sick to suffer for want of nursing, the poor to hunger for want of cooking, the prisoner to languish for want of comforts, the naked to shiver for want of clothing, and refrained from ministering to them in order that we might "keep the sabbath." Even an ancient prophet, who believed in strict sabbath observance, asked in Jehovah's name whether what God chose was not to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, to give our bread to the hungry, to bring the homeless poor to our home, and to clothe the naked. These are permanent duties, and if they seem to conflict with the law of fasting, the latter must give way; if they seem to conflict with the law of the sabbath, the Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath, and encourages us to use His gift as a blessing, and not as an excuse to withhold a blessing.

So much He said while the fourth commandment still bound every Jew, and while He faithfully obeyed it, not using the liberty which He defended for His disciples. For He had come to fulfil the whole Law. But for ourselves to-day the fourth commandment has not been re-enacted, since it was ended even for the Jews at Calvary. It still stands as a glorious prophecy of the endless rest awaiting the people of God. Christian principles as to sabbath and Lord's day were

laid down by the apostle Paul, who spoke plainly, once the death of Christ had abolished The Law and the resurrection had made all things new. See Rom 14^{5}, Gal $4^{9,10}$, Col 2^{16}.

3^{1-6}. In this case our Lord Himself **broke the rules** laid down by the Pharisees, but was careful first to explain and justify His conduct. The commandment forbade work, but it was not work to do good and merely speak words of mercy. So scrupulous was He to give no just cause of offence to those who had a zeal for God, and who did at least coincide with Him in trying to keep The Law, though the object was to establish their own righteousness and not God's.

$3^{14,15}$. Here is the leading passage as to the functions of the apostles: to accompany Him, to be sent out as preachers, to receive authority for casting out demons. Probably the comment is due to Peter; it agrees fairly with his speech before Pentecost. There is no word here of authority to co-opt members, to create a **perpetual succession**, to transmit powers. Christ chose direct, as He did in Paul's case. Modern bishops cannot be with Him in the same sense, nor cast out demons; they only succeed the apostles in the one simple function of preaching, which is shared by many other believers.

5^{21-43}. For comment see Matt 9^{18-25}.

$7^{3,4}$. Mark gave here for his foreign readers a mention of three practices, originated by the Pharisees, and adopted increasingly by all the Jews who were not content to lie under the stigma of not knowing The Law and being accursed. First, they had a custom very sensible when many hands met in one common dish, and carefully washed their hands before eating. Second, if they had been out in public so as

to risk contamination by touching unclean people, they took the hint from the rules as to uncleanness in Lev 15, and made obligatory in all cases what The Law only insisted on in a few—they took a **bath** before eating. Third, they took another hint from the same chapter, which ordered the rinsing of defiled wooden vessels in water, and, on the chance that the vessels had become defiled, ruled that all must always be rinsed. They carried this so far that even a bedstead or divan rested on by an unclean person was to be rinsed.

Now Mark mentioned all these things both as unusual and yet as ordered by Pharisaic custom. The fact that some of them are unusual to us makes it easy to hesitate, and gives colour to the cry, "Surely they did not *bathe* after returning from the market and before eating; the word Baptize must have a weakened meaning here." Something of the same surprise evidently was felt by some Greek scribes, but evidently the word Baptize meant to them only Bathe, for they were not content with it, and actually substituted the word Sprinkle themselves, and in so doing they ruined the sense of the passage. Mark's point was that the Pharisees ordered what was somewhat unusual to Greeks and Romans. And fortunately we have other evidence than Mark's on this point, and it is marshalled by Wetstein, commenting on John 13[10], where he sums up, 'Those who were invited to a banquet used first to wash in the bath.' To say nothing of Juvenal and other foreign allusions, or Luke's comment at 11[38], we have quite a treatise in the Talmud on the various washings enjoined by the Pharisees, and every single statement of Mark is amply confirmed. Thus it is ruled that if a bedstead

cannot be all covered with water at once, first one end must be dipped and then the other.

Those who live in the East to-day, and are jostled in the crowded market-places by all sorts of people in all stages of dirt, and have to entrust their furniture and crockery to native care, see very great merit in all these customs. And even in cooler climates it is no longer a matter of wonder if a man washes his hands before meals and his dishes afterwards. But what we approve on hygienic grounds, the Pharisees wished to enforce on religious. This custom was innocent enough, but the claim made to equate all customs with God's Law was mischievous. For comment on the general case of tradition or God's will, see Matt 15^{1-6}.

7^{19}. The historian, in the light of after events, such as Peter's vision at Joppa and the concessions of the conference at Jerusalem with the delegates from Antioch, saw that our Lord's discussion of eating amounted to declaring all meats clean, and the **Levitical rules** as having no permanent intrinsic force such as was inherent in the command, "Honour thy father and thy mother." But our Lord did not at this moment formally abolish these rules; He could not say of the old Law, "It is finished," till He had obeyed it and fulfilled it to the bitter end; all that He did yet was to direct attention to points unknown or forgotten, and to lodge a thought that would in time render this old rule about ritually unclean things not only obsolete but groundless.

9^{4-7}. The Lord had come to fulfil The Law, and so render it of no further binding effect; to fulfil the Prophecies that spoke of His life and death. It was natural that the Lawgiver and one of the great

Prophets should be interested in the decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem, and so set the crown on His lifelong fulfilment. It was equally natural that Peter should level them up to Him, and wish to retain all three. But the risk of equating them was serious; and since whatever was of permanent value in **The Law and the Prophets** had already been summed up by the Lord in the golden rule, it was well that an emphatic word should come from on high, and that to the recognition of the early disciple, "This is He of whom Moses in The Law, and the Prophets, did write," there should be added by Him who spoke to Moses and the Prophets, "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him," and, that being said, the Law-giver and the Prophet were caught away.

9^{33-35}. Another instance that ambition is a besetting sin of **ministers.** A constitutional historian has remarked that at the Reformation, whenever ministers had the guidance of any reconstructing measures, they always erected some kind of oligarchy with themselves in privileged posts; thus Zwingli, Luther, and Calvin, while at first proclaiming the priesthood of all believers, yet secured themselves predominance in the new arrangements. In England, too, Milton complained that new Presbyter was but old Priest writ large. Pure democracy emerged here under Brown of Norwich, who found it in the Bible and applied it first in ecclesiastical matters, then in political. Our Lord guarded against clericalism as well as sacerdotalism by repeated teaching and by rebuke of any assumption.

$9^{36, 37}$. For comment see Matt 18^{1-10}.

9^{38-40}. This incident should be contrasted with another recorded in Matt 12^{22-30}, and specially with the saying, "He that is not with Me, is against

Me." Relation to Jesus Himself is vital; apparent neutrality here is real hostility. But Christians are always tempted to say that the same is true of fellowship with ourselves, and it needs some explicit saying like this to forbid. **Apparent neutrality** to the work of a church is real friendliness, and this may apply not only to the conduct of governors in such lands as India and China, where its truth is readily perceived, but to cases more parallel to the present, where good work is being done in the name of Christ. Our traditions may make us loth to hold fellowship with Romanists, Swedenborgians, and Unitarians, yet so long as they acknowledge Christ in some way, work in His name, and refrain from attacks on other Christian bodies, may they not claim that this is meant for them, and must we not remember that "he that is not against us, is for us"?

10[3—5]. For comment see Matt 19[7, 8].

10[13—16]. For comment see Luke 18[15—17].

10[38—40]. The questions put by our Lord to James and John seem rather obscure, and their rashness in answering was extreme. Yet the former question could be understood if they remembered such words as those in Hab 2[16], or Jer 25[15], or Isa 51[17], **the cup** of the wine of Jehovah's wrath, or Ezek 23[31—34], the cup of astonishment and desolation. And it is clear that the meaning of sorrow and anguish is here intended, when we read of the cry in Gethsemane, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me," and the later cry of faith and obedience, "The cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" John's own use of this figure in the Revelation makes it plain that he thus understood it afterwards.

What then did our Lord mean by His second figure?

It is not common in the Old Testament, so far as exact words go. The connection makes it highly probable that it means something like enduring pain, and somewhat similar images abound in the Psalms, 32^{6}, 55^{5}, 61^{2}, $69^{2,15}$, 124^{4}, and the prophets, Isa 28^{15}, 30^{28}, Nah 1^{8}. All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me, my spirit is overwhelmed within me, horror hath overwhelmed me: the Lord shall cast down to the earth as a tempest of mighty waters overflowing. Indeed, at Ps 69^{2}, one Greek translator used the very word **Baptize** in this figurative sense. So these passages allow us to think not only of pain, but of death; so that if the cup refers to Gethsemane, the baptism refers to Calvary. And in Luke 12^{50} we find our Lord using the same figure and almost certainly referring to His death, until which He was narrowed in His work, and hedged up to this end.

His reply to James and John therefore meant:—You shall have fellowship with My suffering; you shall be conformed unto My death, and shall attain unto the resurrection from the dead. Of course the experiences of Gethsemane and Calvary could not be fully repeated by any others. Yet James tasted of the cup when he was beaten by the Sanhedrin, and when all the church was scattered abroad from Jerusalem except the apostles, and they were left deserted as they had deserted their Master; and he had his baptism when Herod killed him with the sword, first martyr of the apostolic band. John drank some of that cup when he partook of the tribulation of Jesus in the Isle of Patmos; and if ancient story be true, he had his baptism when he gave his life for testimony to Jesus, last of that same band. They endured lonely sorrow and execution, and so drank the water of gall and were compassed about with the waves of death.

Such an exposition gives full value to the fact that the word Baptize means literally to Dip, Immerse, Overwhelm, and attributes to it here a corresponding figurative meaning. It is, however, well to ask what is the allusion if any unexpected discovery should some day show that the word had an occasional meaning, Pour, and if that be the foundation of the figure here. We cannot refer to a cup into which is poured the wine of the wrath of God; the figure would suggest something poured forth on a person. And then we may refer to many passages, such as, Pour out Thine indignation on them; Pour out Thy wrath on the heathen; I will pour upon them Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger; I will pour out My wrath like water. There arises, however, a difficulty: in what sense can we say that James and John experienced God's fury, His wrath, His indignation? This consideration appears fatal to interpreting the figure thus. There are only two other passages that can be considered, Job 12[21] and Ps 107[40], He poureth contempt upon princes. And we may hesitate to say that God poured contempt on Jesus on the cross, and quite refuse to say that He poured contempt on James and John. Rather did He pour on them the gift of the Holy Spirit in their life; but this fact cannot be alluded to here.

The meaning Pour is then unintelligible here. If we try the meaning, Sprinkle, the only figurative passages in the Old Testament are Isa 52[15], Ezek 36[25], and neither these nor any others afford any help to understanding this passage.

Although, then, it would be absurd to argue from a figurative passage what the literal meaning of a word is, yet a close examination shows that the literal meaning, Submerge, yields a good figurative sense

here, Overwhelm, which renders the whole passage intelligible and consonant with fact; while the other meanings suggested are impossible.

The general exposition may receive faint confirmation from the thought that the cup of suffering can be drained again and again, the baptism of death endured once only; so, too, baptism into the Lord's death in the literal sense is once for all, the cup of communion with Him may often be shared. It is curious that only here and in another figurative passage, I Cor 10^{1-4}, do we find any apparent coupling of the two ceremonies ordained by our Lord.

11^{27-33}. It was a perfectly fair demand of the priests and other officers that Jesus should show His **authority** for neglecting their authority, and taking the law into His own hands by evicting the drovers and bankers from the temple court. Moreover, Jesus had lately bidden His disciples respect their authority since they sat in Moses' seat, and it was all the more necessary that He vindicate His action. If He had answered, He would apparently have said, You ought to have kept the temple clear, and have neglected your duty; if you cannot tell the people whether John was a prophet, you are incompetent and have forfeited your authority; John was a prophet and declared that I am commissioned from heaven direct; I, in My Father's name, clear His house.

It is instructive to see the helplessness of mere officials with a legal succession, when confronted with a rare but real religious phenomenon. They could not agree whether John was called by God; they could not recognize another, greater than John, exhibiting every ancient token of having been called by God, and matching many prophecies of the Messiah.

Just so to-day, even true ministers of God who imagine they are in the **apostolic succession** are sometimes dubious about recognizing others who show the true prophetic spirit, but do not affiliate to some ancient church; and mere ecclesiastics contemptuously deny the possibility of any true ministry outside their own circle.

12. For comment see Matt 22, 23.

14[12—25]. On to His last celebration of the passover our Lord grafted a new and significant custom, which within two months was adopted as a characteristic Christian rite, the breaking of bread, Acts 2[46], generally known to us as the **Lord's supper**, I Cor 11[20].

The associations carried over from the Jewish feast would naturally be that it was a memorial of the death of the firstborn, of a sacrifice, of a redemption accomplished, Ex 12[14, 27, 29]. But even these were not emphasized; we simply recognize the correspondence afterwards. And certain features in the **passover ritual** were instinctively discarded or deliberately forbidden. Thus the general nature of the passover was a feast; but our Lord negatived this view of the Lord's supper, 14[25], and Paul forbade its celebration in this fashion, I Cor 11[34]. The central dish of the feast was a roast lamb; our Lord ignored this, and, except for a temporary aberration at Rome, it was never introduced into Christian celebrations. The Jews at this time attached great importance to a dish of fruit and vinegar, replacing the bitter herbs of Ex 12[8]; but our Lord did not recall either the bitterness of bondage in Egypt or the pleasure of living at ease in Canaan. The haste of the original departure from Egypt was represented in the bread being unleavened and in the meal being eaten standing, Ex 12[11], 13[8]; and the latter custom had,

in Canaan, been expressly reversed, because they were now in comfort and security. All these points our Lord neglected. He took materials to which no meaning had attached before, performed new actions, and uttered new words. On these novelties our attention must concentrate.

Bread and wine in themselves had no significance beyond the bare fact of their being gifts of God for the food of man, Ps 104[14, 15]. The fact of our Lord handing them to the disciples at a meal implies that He accepted this significance; but to it He added fresh associations by His deeds and words accompanying.

Emblematic actions were common with Jewish teachers. In connection with various passovers Moses had used his rod symbolically, and had sprinkled ashes toward heaven as a sign of plagues; our Lord had cleansed the temple, John 2[13—22], had fed five thousand people, John 6[4—14], and had a few minutes earlier washed the feet of these disciples, John 13[1—11]; in each case He had followed up the action with a commentary. His first action now was to take a loaf, bless it, as He had blessed the fishes when He fed the four thousand, Mark 8[7], break, and give to the disciples.

One meaning of the **breaking** may perhaps be divined from His quoting Zech 13[7] shortly afterwards, and with express reference to His death, and from a neighbouring passage which Matthew recognized as bearing on these events, Zech 11[4—14]. The prophet had had two staves, Grace and Union. One he broke as a sign that the covenant between God and the people was broken; grace was withdrawn. The other he broke as a sign that the brotherhood between Judah and Israel was broken; union was ended. The death of our Lord certainly did break the special tie between

God and the Jews, and did render unimportant their intimate connection between themselves. But if He really intended to hint at these facts, His meaning has been generally overlooked.

The disciples could hardly fail to recognize His mute prediction when in a few hours they saw His **body broken** by buffets in the face, scourge, nails, and lance, even if not a bone was broken. And as they were already taught of His violent death, and had just received warning of its imminence, 14[18—21], they probably recognized the meaning at once.

When they were bidden **eat**, both by the bare fact of the loaf being handed and by the express order that Matthew records, they must have understood presently that the death of Christ availed to procure some gift from God which they might appropriate.

They would never imagine that He meant the loaf was actually changed into His body, that they literally ate Him standing there before them. Such a monstrous idea would not be intended by His habitual speech, which was very figurative; nor were they likely to think of it after being rebuked for taking literally His words about leaven, 8[15—21].

And if He spoke Aramaic, as was natural at Jerusalem, 15[22]; John 5[2], 19[20]; Acts 1[19], 21[40], 22[2], He simply said, "This, My body." When Mark inserted the word, Is, he would understand and mean, Signifies, as when he explained, "Boanerges, which *is*, Sons of thunder," 3[17]; "Corban, that *is to say*, Given," 7[11]; "The court, which *is* the Praetorium," 15[16]; or with a fuller formula, "Talitha cumi, which *is*, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise," 5[41]; "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which *is*, being interpreted, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" 15[34].

Then taking a cup and giving thanks, as over the loaves when He fed the four thousand, 8^{6}, He gave to them and they all drank. At this point He departed altogether from passover symbolism, and referred to the great **covenant service** when Jehovah and His people pledged themselves to fellowship, Ex 19^{4}—24^{11}. In idea, though not in time, this was the logical completion of the passover: when Josiah undertook to revive religion, he was led at once to renew the passover celebration as well as make a covenant on his own account, II Kings 23$^{21-23}$.

The prominent thoughts in a covenant were, **Mutual pledges**, ratified by a sacrifice and by a joint meal. The use of the very word, Covenant, would carry our Lord's endorsement of the thought of an agreement, such as was foreseen by Jeremiah, 31$^{31-34}$. But whereas the prophet saw only the house of Israel in his horizon, our Lord dropped the limitation and spoke of "many" as within His purpose.

The **sacrificial sense** lies in the word, Is shed, which even when used of wine denotes not an ordinary pouring from a flagon to a cup, but a gush as from a destroyed vessel, Matt 9^{17}. When used of blood, as here, it expresses martyrdom, Matt 23^{35}, Acts 22^{20}, Rom 3^{15}, Rev 16^{6}. In connection with Ex 24$^{5-8}$, it pointed at once to Christ's death as a sacrifice bringing God and men together.

They **all drank** from the cup. This corresponded to the meal that concluded the covenant service, Ex 24^{11}, and would also repeat the suggestion that God offered them some gift through the sacrifice of Christ, which they might appropriate.

They could not imagine they were drinking real blood, a proceeding repeatedly forbidden, Lev 3^{17}, or

that they were drinking the blood of Jesus standing before them unwounded. Indeed, if He too drank, the impossibility was even more apparent. And as if to anticipate and obviate the misunderstandings of a later date, He referred to the contents of the cup as "this fruit of the vine," Matt 26[29].

In this closing allusion He announced that it was His **last meal**; and, recurring to His frequent imagery of a marriage feast for the consummation of the age, Matt 25[1—13], 22[1—11], He hinted on the one hand that the Bridegroom was about to leave them, so that during His absence feasting was suspended, 2[20], and on the other that He would return for a joyful reunion, Luke 12[35—37].

15[37]. For comment see John 19[30].

15[38]. The Old Covenant being now **fulfilled** by the perfect obedience to the Jewish Law, and the New Covenant being inaugurated by the death of the covenant Victim, the temple of the Old Covenant was no longer needed, and its holy place was exposed to view as now rendered a common thing.

16[15, 16]. The paragraph in which this command occurs was apparently not penned by Mark. It may be either an anonymous abstract from the last chapters of Matthew and Luke, or an extract from the records of Papias as to "what Aristion and the Elder John, the disciples of the Lord, say." For an Armenian manuscript copied 986 A.D. heads it in the same fashion as it heads the main gospel, "According to the Elder Aristion." We have no reason to discredit the paragraph in either case.

The **command** was given in the first instance to the eleven, but was accompanied with signs promised to them that believe. The good news was to be passed

on, each believer becoming in turn a preacher, and in that sense maintaining an apostolic succession.

It was contemplated that **believers** would be baptized, and that no others would be. All the stress was laid on belief, baptism being simply a corollary. Nothing direct was said on two cases of common occurrence to-day: those who believe but are not baptized, perhaps because of ignorance or inattention or faulty training; those who are "baptized" according to the custom of their church, but do not believe. Yet surely the former lack what is technical rather than real; and though their lack may raise difficulties in church relations, it cannot cause them to lack salvation. The latter lack what is real and vital.

LUKE

Luke 3. For comments see Matt 3 and Mark 1.

5^{12-14}. The man was full of leprosy; therefore by a special provision in **The Law**, however ill he might be and feel, he was ceremonially clean, Lev 13^{13}. Under these circumstances Jesus might touch him without becoming unclean. He was always scrupulous in obeying The Law and in teaching others to obey. So, having cured the leper, He bade him carry out strictly the Levitical prescriptions. Thus He gave testimony to the priests of His own loyalty to The Law. Thus far it stood valid as the expression of the Lawgiver, not yet replaced by anything better and wider.

5^{18-26}. It has been pointed out that Jesus saw the faith of the four men who carried the paralytic, and forgave him for their sake. Similar cases are adduced: the centurion's servant healed at a distance with a comment on the centurion's faith, 7^{2-10}; a nobleman's son in Capernaum healed at a distance, John 4^{46-53}; a demoniac girl restored on the request of her mother, whose faith was commended, Matt 15^{21-28}. These are claimed to show that vicarious faith sufficed to procure benefits for others, and it is inferred that the faith of parents may avail to secure for their infants forgiveness of sins, and so may warrant **infant baptism**. But the facts are incompletely apprehended, the point at issue

is begged, the analogy is incomplete, and so the conclusion is thoroughly unsound.

Thus, in this case, undoubtedly the carriers showed their faith by the exertions they made and the ingenuity they displayed; but the sick man also showed his, in that as soon as he heard the command to rise, he obeyed. The demoniac girl, in the nature of the case, could not believe or disbelieve; her mother begged, Have mercy on *me*, and the reply was, O woman, great is thy faith, be it done unto *thee* even as thou wilt. The cure was regarded on both sides as a kindness to her rather than to her daughter.

In the other cases, nothing is said as to the presence or absence of faith in the sufferer. Moreover, neither in their cases nor in that of the demoniac girl is anything said about the forgiveness of sins. Thus both the condition and the conclusion of the argument are wanting.

This case is, then, the least weak; but there is still a grave discrepancy. The paralytic had committed actual sins: infants certainly inherit a tendency to commit sin which will in time evince itself in actual misdeeds; but when brought for "baptism," they are usually far too young for conscious transgression. Is it appropriate to say to an infant who cannot understand and who has done no wrong, Thy sins are forgiven thee?

A better analogy would be that those who are strong in faith should seek to arouse faith in others, and bring them face to face with the Saviour as the only One able to forgive, then stand aside to let His words of encouragement and pardon quicken faith into obedience. When His power to forgive sins was doubted, He proved it by an illustrative miracle:

"priests" who assume a like power to-day ought to be ready to prove their claims.

5[36—39]. A mixture of the old customs and the new was impossible. Our Lord was thinking mainly of excusing the new, for all the prejudices of his hearers were enlisted for the old, such as fasting. He had to justify introducing and countenancing fresh customs, even while He made gentle allowance for those who adhered to the older. But He certainly laid down the incompatibility of the two, and now that Christianity is well in the field, and Christian customs have the prestige of nineteen centuries, we often need to use the other edge of His saying. We cannot patch Christianity with **Jewish rites** without spoiling both. Still more absurd is it to make an essentially Jewish system hold out by adding to it a few Christian customs. Such attempts have often been made in Catholic circles, and often the question may fairly be asked whether the doctrines and rites and hierarchy are more Jewish or Christian. Altars, priests, sacrifices—all these do not agree with the simple worship that the apostles practised. Tithes are no fit mould for Christian liberality; that will not be confined within arbitrary limits, but will burst them. Nor even will all the forms of the first century suffice for the needs of to-day: new wine demands fresh wineskins; to seek in the New Testament for a precise pattern of doctrine of worship or of church government, for exact reproduction to-day, is to risk spilling the new life. Nothing of these to-day need be inharmonious; but nowhere are we bidden to stereotype in one mould, and here we are warned against it.

6[1—11]. For comment see Mark 2[23—28], 3[1—6].

8[40—56]. For comment see Matt 9[18—25].

9²⁸—³⁶. For comment see Mark 9²—⁷.

9⁵⁰. For comment see Mark 9³⁸—⁴⁰.

10²⁵—³⁷. Compare Matt 22³⁴—⁴⁰.

11²³. Compare Mark 9³⁸—⁴⁰.

11³⁸. The custom of the Pharisees was to **bathe** before dinner if they had been within reach of possible pollution, Mark 7⁴. The accuracy of this statement is often questioned, but it is amply borne out by many Pharisaic statements in the Talmud, where twelve treatises discuss all the customary purifications. Dr. Gill has quoted many of them in his commentary on these passages. Schürer gives a few illustrations of the discussions as to whether plunge-baths might be taken in ponds, running water, 120 gallons of collected water, hot springs, ordinary spring water. But apart from archæology, exactly the same custom obtains to-day among the upper classes of Hindus in India; they would be scandalized at the thought of dining without bathing first, and before meals it is a regular thing for rivers and pools to be thronged with bathers.

Our Lord had been teaching in public, and casting out a demon. The Pharisee asked Him to dinner, but apparently, like his co-religionist mentioned in 7⁴⁴, offered Him no opportunity for bathing, and then affected surprise that Jesus sat down without. His conduct resembles that of many who first manufacture difficulties by their inattention, and then are astonished at them.

12⁵⁰. Compare Mark 10³⁸.

13¹⁰—¹⁷ and 14¹—⁶. Compare Mark 2²³—3⁶.

16¹⁶, ¹⁷. The sentence here is ambiguous, but both context and another utterance recorded in Matt 5¹⁷, ¹⁸, and His consistent obedience to The Law, suggest that the meaning is, The Law and the Prophets were the

only things preached until John; from that time the good news of the kingdom of God is preached.

18[15-17]. The general purpose for which the touch of Jesus was sought was for healing, Matt 8[15], 9[18, 29]; Mark 7[33], 8[22]; Luke 4[40], 5[13], 22[51]. But in this case the purpose was spiritual rather than bodily, as is very evident by Matt 19[13]. Even as Joseph brought his children that Jacob might **lay his hands on** them and bless them, so these mothers brought their little children and babies. The disciples were apparently deeply interested in the words of Jesus, and they could not bear any interruption, but tried to keep away the mothers just as they tried to keep away Bartimæus shortly afterwards. Jesus in turn rebuked their exclusive spirit, and referred them to these very babes so innocent, these very children so loving and unselfish, as pourtraying the temper needed for the kingdom.

The incident has no direct bearing on the question of infant baptism, nor even on the standing of **children** within The Church. Those who believe that The Church was already founded must note that the children were not brought for admission to it, and that they were not in the upshot baptized, only caressed and blessed, prayed over with loving hands laid on them. Those who observe that no Church is heard of till after the resurrection, and therefore only expect ceremonies of the Old Covenant, will find none such here. If they think that baptism was then represented by circumcision, they must observe that Jesus was not asked to circumcise them; indeed, the babes were probably already a week old and therefore circumcised.

Nobody claims that these babies and children were **baptized.** The disciples of Jesus already practised baptism, John 4[1, 2], yet they did not offer to baptize

these babies, nor did Jesus rebuke them for that neglect, nor did He baptize them, but He blessed them unbaptized.

If any argument is to be built on the incident here, it may be suggested that to bring little children or babies and have them "baptized" to-day, does not help at all to fulfil the command, Let the little children come unto Me; and unless the ceremony is followed up with careful teaching, it may absolutely hinder them from coming for themselves to Jesus Christ; whereas the teaching itself, irrespective of any christening in infancy, may be rewarded by the children coming, even while little, to enrol themselves as disciples, asking for baptism, and remaining to learn all things that Jesus commands.

20[1–8]. For comment see Mark 11[27–33].

20[21–26]. For comment see Matt 22[15–22].

22[14–20]. To the account of the last supper given by Mark, Luke added two important details, the second of which was evidently derived from Paul, and the former was extremely interesting to a Gentile. Verses [16, 18] show that our Lord viewed the **passover** not only as a memorial, but as a type, whose fulfilment would be the kingdom of God. In other words, it was part of a system of shadows; it was being observed for the last time so far as it had any value, and was on the verge of abolition. This is the thought that gave rise to I Cor 5[7]; Heb 9[8–10], 10[1, 2], 8[13]. But, on the other hand, from the passover our Lord was evolving a new rite, which He expressly enjoined as a **new memorial** of Himself, 22[19]. This aspect of it is commented on in connection with I Cor 10, 11.

24[44–49]. The **Old Testament** was shown to contain many things now first becoming important. Repentance

and remission of sins had long been preached, but not in His name as yet. And it needed that Christ should open their mind before the Old Testament was recognized as teaching that He should suffer and rise from the dead, and that remission of sins was available for all nations. He did not apparently open their mind to see that baptism was taught there, from which we may infer either or both of these conclusions: That baptism is not in the Old Testament, but is distinctly a New Covenant ordinance; That baptism is of less importance than repentance, remission of sins, and power from on high. These conclusions may be independently established.

The promise of the Father, the power from on high, was to be sent forth not only on the eleven, but on others who were with them, 24[33]; there was no confining of favour or duty to any class.

JOHN

JOHN $1^{12,13}$. Here, in a passage where the apostle gave his ripest wisdom, he declared carefully what entitles men to call God "Father." He put it in three ways, and exposed three probable mistakes. The family circle is entered by being begotten of God, entrusting one's self to Jesus, accepting Him as Lord. **Natural descent**, following the lead of natural affection, and even sheer force of decision, are not enough without the Divine touch. This truth is generally recognized in Christian circles; yet since there are certain real advantages derived from birth of Christian parents and nurture in Christian homes, these advantages are sometimes over-valued to the detriment of the apostle's explicit teaching. It is in perfect accord with this doctrine that he records without comment the popular belief that Jesus was son of Joseph, 6^{42}, $7^{27,41,42}$, and the silence of Jesus as to the peculiarity of His birth. His claims and power rested not on earthly descent, but on Divine appointment.

1^{14}. If John believed that the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us every time a priest duly consecrated the bread and wine on the altar, he could not have opposed similar carnal notions in verse ^{13}.

$1^{16,17}$. In Jesus Christ, God on earth, were lodged all virtue and all knowledge, not by gift, but by original possession. From His abundance may every believer

receive, and every trait in His character may be matched in the believer. Moses was but a channel, a bare trustee; Jesus was a benefactor, a fountain. Moses conveyed an external code, Jesus offered to influence the inner life. Moses did his work and died; Jesus still works continually, imparting help and wisdom.

It is a strange interpretation when the "Church" is introduced here as another medium, with the plea that only through a ministry with **apostolic succession** can grace be secured, only through such a ministry can true doctrine be taught. The contrast drawn by the apostle is exactly between such human media as Moses or a series of ministers, and a Divine medium such as Christ; compare Heb 10[11, 12]. Or, while we indeed read "through" Jesus Christ, we may remember He is full of grace and truth, and think of Him not simply as mediating blessings, but as dispensing them direct from His own fulness. The thought of an intervening caste of priests is not only alien, but hostile to the passage.

1[23–34]. Compare Matt 3.

2[13–22]. Compare Matt 21[12, 13].

3[5]. "Born of water," a phrase possibly founded on a reminiscence of Gen 1[2], appears to be an allusion to **baptism.** Nicodemus was a Pharisee; the Pharisees rejected the baptism of John, Luke 7[30], not only because it was without official approval, John 1[19–24], but because they rejected his demand on themselves which it symbolized, Matt 3[7–9]. They would not repent, but were satisfied with their conduct. The first thing needed of a Pharisee, as of anybody else, was repentance for sin. He, as much as any Gentile convert, needed to be "born anew." But John had said this was only

the first or lesser thing, and that the second or greater was a new endowment with holy spirit, which Jesus could bestow. Jesus endorsed this, and, in figures modified from John's, demanded repentance and altered life, laying the stress on the latter, and declaring it to be impossible of developement from the former life, or of mere natural inheritance, but a gift to be received only from above.

Sometimes the mistake is made of giving only a partial translation to this figurative language, first reading it, "be born of water and born of the Spirit," then interpreting it, "be baptized and be regenerated." This is to recognize a spiritual meaning in the second half of the phrase, but to adopt the crass literalism of Nicodemus in the former half, and not to recognize that the spiritual meaning there is Repent. It is to couple together a sign and a reality as two conditions.

It is better when the phrase is not expanded, and when weight is given to the close fusion of words. **Repentance and new life** normally go together, and the kingdom of God is open to those who possess the double gift. If it is demanded—in no practical spirit, surely!—that we dissect and estimate the value of each apart from the other, we have the case of Judas, who repented and proved the genuineness of his repentance by surrendering the fruit of his sin; yet because he did not turn to Jesus Christ, he missed the new life, and went to his own place. No case is given of new life apart from repentance, nor can we easily imagine one; the blunder of the Pharisees lay exactly in supposing it was possible. The dying robber assuredly repented; he had but little opportunity of exhibiting on earth by his actions any new life, but he certainly was never baptized—yet he was told that he should be with

Jesus in Paradise that day. His case confirms our conclusion that what is essential is not baptism, the sign, but repentance, the thing signified. If it be said that he died before the institution of Christian baptism, the same objection holds in this case also, and forbids the objector referring to this passage in any argument about Christian baptism.

3^{22-26} and $4^{1,2}$. The baptism practised at this time by Jesus does not appear to differ in act or meaning from that of John, for the only contrast raised was purely personal. **Repentance**, the condition of forgiveness—such, then, was the truth enforced; the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, the reason of forgiveness, was a connection not yet revealed because the facts were not yet accomplished; the death to sin, followed by resurrection to new life, was a truth enforced indeed, though not in these words, and not yet associated with baptism. Baptism into the name of . . . the Holy Spirit would be premature, if not unintelligible, while as yet the Spirit was not given, John 7^{39}, Acts 19^{2-4}: and this was true whether the baptism were by the disciples of John or of Jesus.

It is remarkable that the act of baptism was left by Jesus to His disciples, and that Peter in like fashion handed it over to others, Acts 10^{48}, and that Paul generally did the same, I Cor 1^{14-17}. Such **devolution to inferiors** might well have prevented the growth of a ritual spirit, as if the performance of manual routine could be compared with the delivery of a soul-compelling message! There may be a convenience and orderliness in having baptism and the Lord's supper administered as a rule by ministers to-day, but there is no reason or scriptural precedent for confining it to them.

4^{19-24}. Similarly the sanctity of special places was denied. Worship is acceptable not according to liturgy, celebrant, and hallowed walls, but according to the temper of the worshippers.

5^{8-16}. Compare Mark 2^{23-28}.

5^{39-47}. They searched the scriptures, thinking that by obeying **The Law** given through Moses, on whom they set their hope, they would have eternal life. But Moses and all the prophets wrote of Jesus, and, unlike Nathanael, they would not come to Him who alone could give life. The promises, the types, the ceremonies, the sacrifices, all that Moses wrote, were to set their thoughts toward the Son of God; but being used as ends in themselves, they hardened the hearts of the searchers. With all the Divine education meant to make them wise unto salvation, they failed to recognize the Saviour. Not believing Moses and the prophets, many could not believe when He came from the dead.

The Bible is not intended as an object of study in itself. It may be studied as mere literature, and will then still divert attention from Christ. It is the appointed and only means of knowledge about Christ and God; and not only of this gospel, but of all the New Testament, it may be said that it is written that men may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, they may have life in His name.

6^{48-58}. Our Lord here employed startling metaphors which were by no means hackneyed, and indeed were so obscure that the Jews justly called them hard sayings. His words about being born again, drinking His cup, and sharing His baptism could be appreciated by those who thought over their ancient scriptures. But

the figures here were not from familiar sources; they would seem contrary not only to the ceremonial law, but also to natural instinct. A spiritual sense to the action of feeding was not indeed new, Hosea 4[16], Jer 3[15], Ezek 34, and was afterwards adopted by Christ and His apostles, John 21[15–17], Acts 20[28], I Pet 5[2], Rev 7[17]. He had spoken of allaying spiritual hunger and thirst, and used the metaphor again, John 4[13–15, 32–34], 6[35], 7[37]. But to drink blood was strictly forbidden to every Jew; to eat the flesh and drink the blood of a man was horrible to all. No wonder that many of His disciples fell off and others murmured.

Yet the scriptures which they searched could give a hint or two as to the meaning. Ezekiel was bidden eat a roll and assimilate its message: was it hard to divine that Jesus was bidding His followers appropriate His own nature, and grow by the strength He would supply? "The blood is the life," and it was generally the chief feature in a sacrifice. Three mighty men hazarded their lives to get David a draught of water; he would not drink "the blood of the men," but poured it out to God. Was it hard to see that Jesus was hinting He would offer **His life a sacrifice** to God, and that by virtue of this sacrifice men might live if they appropriated it for themselves? It was the time of Passover, 6[4], when they should remember the blood that secured salvation and the flesh that supplied strength.

It would seem that some guessed His meaning too well, and left Him, not because they were puzzled, but because they were scandalized. He claimed to be the Son of God, become flesh, offering Himself a sacrifice for the life of the world to be redeemed, a means for the life of the world to be sustained. This was not

too hard to understand, but was too hard for many to accept.

It is customary in many quarters to use these verses in close connection with the **Lord's supper,** although this had not yet been observed, although our Lord gave an express warning not to take His words literally, 6[63], and although the apostle never connected the two. Undoubtedly our Lord was now alluding to the mystery of His death and the life He would impart after resurrection; and later on, at the last supper, He referred to His pierced body and His shed blood. But the speech now and the action then only partially overlapped, and did not coincide, nor did they refer to one another. Each illustrates the death, but neither illustrates the other at all well. Mozart composed several masses, and used the same words again and again. What gain is there in using the Gloria of the twelfth mass to interpret the Gloria of the eleventh? Dean Stanley wrote a book on Sinai and Palestine, George Adam Smith wrote another on the Historical Geography of the Holy Land; either may be a capital companion on a tour in Southern Syria, but there is not much profit in taking one as a guide to the other. An architect may describe a building he means to erect, and may presently publish a sketch of its elevation; but when the building stands in its solid beauty, that is what needs attention, and not the anticipations of it.

Further, there is a discrepancy in the terms that may warn us from coupling this passage with our celebration of the Lord's supper. He spoke here of giving His flesh for the life of the world, and of our eating His flesh and drinking His blood. At His last supper there was probably flesh provided—a roast lamb; but

He passed that by and took bread instead, with wine. Here He spoke of flesh and blood, there He gave a loaf and (wine in) a cup.

And experience shows that an unnecessary coupling together of this passage with that about the Lord's supper has led to grave errors. It is only too easy to say that as then we eat the bread and drink the wine, and as our Lord spoke of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, therefore the bread *is* His flesh, and the wine *is* His blood. The evidence of the senses seems of little avail against this conclusion, so long as it claims even this superficial support from scripture. Yet the conclusion is part and parcel of that **sacramental system** which has overlaid the gospel, and teaches reliance on ceremony rather than on Christ. Meat and drink were always only a shadow of the things to come: now that the substance is come in Christ, why draw our strength from things that can be seen, and not hold fast Him who is within the veil, the Head Himself?

7^{39}. This is quite explicit that the Spirit was not yet given. Compare also 14^{26}, 15^{26}, 16^{7}. The Church to-day is the Body of Christ on earth, indwelt and energized by the Spirit; then it existed only in embryo and was not yet born.

$10^{1—18}$. In this allegory three relations of the flock deserve attention, to the door, to the shepherd, and to the fold.

Jesus is the only door for the sheep—not of the fold. Only through Him are found safety, freedom, and guidance. Scribes and Pharisees then, ritualistic priests now, claim that these things are theirs to bestow; Christ claims them as His alone.

The sheep are saved only by the death of the

Shepherd. If Confucius, Noah, Numa, Socrates, and the Buddha are saved, it is not for their piety alone, nor their unavoidable ignorance of a Saviour yet unborn, but because that Saviour loved them and freely laid down His life for them, promising that He would let them hear His voice and bring them into the one flock. For there is no other name under heaven wherein there is salvation.

No one fold is large enough for this flock. No Jewish nation then, no earthly organization now, however large and venerable, however new and select, can embrace all true believers, any more than it can exclude all pretenders. Not the most imposing Catholic Church, not the most self-satisfied Particular Baptist church, contains all the saved; others there are, not of those folds, whom Christ will bring into the one flock.

13[12—17]. By assuming that this command in [14] is both literal and universal, popes, emperors, lord high almoners, and Baptists have been led to more or less regular **feet-washing** as a religious rite. The only other ground for such an interpretation is at I Tim 5[10], where the context shows it is simply an instance of and metaphor for hospitality; compare Gen 18[4], 19[2], 24[32], 43[24], and contrast Luke 7[44]. The true lesson is to beware of pride and arrogance, and to cultivate mutual service; compare Matt 23[8—11].

A variety of this error is to suppose that this was really the institution of Christian baptism. This is refuted by the discord with Matt 28[19], as to time, circumstance, condition, and subjects, and by the express contrast here between washing the feet and bathing, 13[10].

Those who note that these actions are discriminated,

as well as pouring and dipping, 13[5, 26], sometimes suggest that just as baptism cleansed initially, so the Lord's supper repeats the partial cleansing afterwards needed, and that 13[10] exactly refers to this. But in a few minutes our Lord declared they were clean through His word, 15[3]. John understood that we are bathed once for all by the propitiation, and repeatedly cleansed by the same means, I John 2[2], 1[7]. Baptism and the Lord's supper only depict these facts, not effect them; it is doubtful if any allusion was meant here or seen subsequently.

13[34], 15[12, 17]. In this farewell discourse, the direction already given several times to the multitude and to enquirers was repeated thrice. The command laid on the disciples—old indeed in words, but new in breadth, in eminence, in motive—is, **Love one another.** A Christian needs no other law.

14[26], 16[13], warrant our accepting the **New Testament** as the only written standard for our creed and our conduct. It is the work of these disciples and their friends, who were thus promised Divine prompting, to recollect everything essential, and to explore all further truth needed for this age. Although no special promise is annexed to their written words, although any other words of theirs handed down orally for some time before being committed to writing would deserve equal attention, first to verify, then to heed, yet all tradition yields only a few other sentences of theirs, barely as long as our shortest epistle, and the genuineness of the tradition is hardly beyond question.

It may well be that other directions of theirs were not in words mainly, but as to certain **customs**; there were some things that Paul ordained in all the churches. And therefore any doctrine or custom adopted every-

where in the earliest times by all Christians may claim apostolic sanction, which is in the last resort the sanction of our Lord through the Spirit—and this whether or not any express words of institution remain on record. On this ground we can recognize as Divinely approved, not only the baptism of believers and the frequent partaking of the Lord's supper by all believers, women as well as men, but also the weekly observance of the Lord's day.

15^{25}. While Jesus scrupulously observed the **Jewish Law**, it was often clear that He viewed it not as an end in itself, but as a means. And while Pharisees tried to keep it as a means of earning salvation for themselves, He kept it as a means of averting from them the curse pronounced by Moses on all who broke it after covenanting to keep it; and also as a necessary preliminary to His work of atonement for Pharisees and Jews and Gentiles. Their idea of duty was bounded by the Law. At 5^{39-47} and 8^{5-11} we see His consciousness of a wider outlook than was given from the standpoint of the Old Covenant; and He often selected His pronouns so as to suggest that it was their Law and not in every sense binding on Him; compare 8^{17} and 10^{34}. If He chose to lay aside His freedom and put Himself under the yoke of The Law, it was that He might lift it for ever off their necks; compare Acts 15^{10}, Matt 11^{28-30}.

17^{16-20}. This chapter is often called the **High-priestly** prayer: the language here justifies and illustrates the title. The Lord's work hitherto had been mainly prophetic, initiated by the descent of the Spirit, who had spoken occasionally through the prophets, but came at His baptism to abide with Him. The words which the Father gave Him, He had by this time given

unto the disciples, who received them and believed in His mission. The time was ripe for the next step. He now consecrated Himself. The word refers specially to the temple ritual, as in Matt 23[17]; Heb 9[13], 10[10, 14], 13[12], and suggests that our Lord at this moment dedicated Himself as High Priest, and proceeded forthwith to offer the sacrifice for Himself before offering the atoning sacrifice for the world, Heb 5[3–7]. But the important thought here is that while the Lord thus responds to His appointment, He requests that His disciples be associated with Him: like Him in being not of the world morally and spiritually, in being commissioned by Him prophetically to proclaim God's will, may they also be consecrated from on high as **priests**, to follow on His atoning sacrifice with all other service. Indeed, His object in this new departure was to raise His disciples to this plane, not in empty ritual formality, but in deed and truth. This privilege was not simply for the eleven who heard Him pray, but for all that believe through their word. Thus all believers share in this priesthood, for which the High Priest here made request, and are joined thereby into one body, whose vital energy is derived from Father and Son. Beyond this priestly body of believers lies the world, to which they do not belong, but which is to be attracted by the spectacle of Christian fellowship and by the testimony rendered to Christ.

19[28–30]. Our Lord was always mindful of the predictions concerning the Messiah, 13[18], 17[12]; at times He deliberately set Himself to fulfil some, and so put out striking claims to be Messiah, Matt 21[1–5]. Thus He took care to fulfil all that was written about Him in the prophets.

But He had come to do more—to **fulfil The Law,**

Matt 5[17]. This phrase means no longer to accomplish predictions, but to accomplish orders, *i.e.* to yield perfect obedience. This is the meaning of His words at His baptism: Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. So Luke wrote of Barnabas and Saul fulfilling the commissions of the church at Antioch, in Jerusalem, Acts 12[25], and in Asia Minor, Acts 14[26]. So Paul spoke of John obeying his call, Acts 13[25]. So he wrote of obeying The Law, Rom 13[8], of Archippus discharging his duties as minister, Col 4[17]. Now Jesus had consistently and thoroughly fulfilled The Law from the moment that we hear of Him going away from the Father's house to Nazareth and obeying Joseph and Mary as The Law enjoined. He had challenged His accusers to point to any sin, 8[46], and the only thing they alleged was a breach of the sabbath law: on this they were often harping, 9[16]. But He explicitly defended Himself on this point, and declared that their interpretation of that law was often wrong, and that when any direction as to showing kindness and humanity conflicted with the sabbath law, the latter must give way to the more lasting obligation; compare Mark 2[23—28]. His conscience was void of offence, and to His Father He declared He had accomplished the work given Him to do.

He had told the disciples that not one atom could pass away from The Law till all its precepts had been accomplished. That was now the case. He had obeyed it faithfully—in the judgement of even His enemies, in that they dared not charge Him face to face with disobedience; in His own judgement; and in the judgement of the Father as testified by the resurrection shortly afterwards.

The Law was thus fully obeyed by one person. If

it had been Paul who had kept it, then Paul for himself would have honestly earned all the privileges offered in the covenant as a matter of right, not of favour; but no one else would profit directly. The case of Jesus was different. He was not merely a Jew, but the King of the Jews, and His acts were representative, available for the whole nation if they did not explicitly disown Him as such. He was the Seed foretold, summing up the whole seed of Abraham. He could act for the nation, being born under The Law, that He might redeem them that were under The Law; and that is the point here.

He had then obeyed The Law for the whole Jewish nation. The **covenant was fulfilled**, and therefore became of no further binding effect on any one. A tribute once paid cannot be exacted again, whether it was paid in person or by representative and head. A contract once executed cannot be imposed afresh on either contractor without his consent. From the moment of Christ's death, ending a life of perfect obedience, no single Jew trusting in Him need have paid any further attention to The Law. Its benefits were purchased for him and offered him on simpler conditions.

This did not mean that all **directions for conduct** were abolished. Whoever would share in the benefits offered by Christ must agree to His conditions. These might be summed up in one word, Surrender, and that word embraced everything. Christ sought implicit obedience in every single detail of life, and so delved where the old Law left the soil hard. He demanded such allegiance as was not due even to parents. He extended His dominion beyond acts to speech, and even to desire, in a way that The Law had only exacted in

one instance. And before He had yet carried His fulfilment far, He gave the one precept that is a sufficient guide for conduct to every Jew—or, for that matter, to every man. It was a gain for the Jew to have his 613 precepts replaced by a single one : Behave to others as you wish them to behave to you. Truly Christ's yoke was easy ; but it was a yoke, and, freeing from The Law, did not leave a Jew without obligation and counsel.

For the Gentile this obedience of our Lord to the Jewish Law is of trifling concern ; we have an example of a life spent in unmurmuring and voluntary subjection, which may encourage us to bear our light burden with patience. But the keeping of that Jewish Law, which was a sign distinguishing Jews from all others, chiefly availed to place Jew and Gentile on one plane before God, as those who for themselves had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, Rom 3^{23}.

Something more, then, was needed than a life of perfect obedience, else Gethsemane rather than Olivet might have closed His earthly career. The sins of the world had to be dealt with, and here there was no distinction. The Law had reminded the Jews by its endless round of bleeding sacrifices that covering must be made, but it only suggested without providing a covering. John the Baptist recognized in Jesus the Lamb of God, who should take away the sin of the world. And this He accomplished in His death.

He had reached another stage in His career. Long ago had He declared by His entering the world with the body prepared for Him, Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O God. Beginning His proclamation of God as Righteous Father, He had notified that He was ready to fulfil all righteousness. He had lately rejoiced

that His glorifying God in speech and action was accomplished, 17[4]. Now the Servant of Jehovah was doing what lay beyond the power of Moses or Paul, Ex 32[32], Rom 9[3], bearing the iniquity of all His fellow Jews. Dying to redeem the transgressions that were under the first covenant, He declared with His latest breath, It is finished.

And therein He did a mightier work than was bounded by national lines. Seed of Abraham, He stood for Abraham's race not only before God, but before mankind, for in Him were all nations to be blessed. Seed of the woman, He acted for the race, enduring the bruise on His heel, but crushing the serpent's head. His soul being made an offering for sin, His days were prolonged and He saw the travail of His soul, justifying many. Priest not after the order of Aaron, but of Melchizedek, He became author of eternal salvation to all who would obey Him. Annulling the foregoing commandment, He was bringing in a better hope through which we may all draw near to God. Abolishing in His flesh the enmity, The Law of commandments contained in ordinances, He slew the enmity between Jew and Gentile, and provided access in one spirit unto the Father. Fulfilling that first covenant with Jews only, He became surety of a better one for all mankind. In this **New Covenant** mediated by His death, all who were called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. When He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, He was ready to sit down on the right hand of God, and exercise His heavenly priesthood for all mankind. By His death, Jewish Law and Sinaitic Covenant were fulfilled, and the Christian has naught to do with either.

20$^{19-23}$. On this evening there were gathered in the upper room several disciples; not only ten of the twelve, but others with them, Luke 24^{33}. What our Lord said here, He said to all who were there, and not simply to the apostles.

After greeting, He at once stated the great **purpose of The Church** about to be constituted. He sent them, as the Father had sent Him, to redeem the world. He had done alone the first and greater part of the work, making atonement for sin; but He had done more. He had also avoided all sin, and had given new hope to sinners; He had lived a life of purity and helpfulness; He had won many people to love the Father and Himself, and had trained many followers to continue His work. These parts of His own commission He now passed on to His disciples, who had already been promised that they should do greater works than He.

Next He breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Spirit. Ezekiel had seen in vision the breath entering into the bodies, so that they lived; God had breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life; now the same symbolic action was employed again with deeper meaning. The Body of Christ now formed was **quickened into life**, even if as yet it was helpless and infantile, not yet endowed with power from on high, only able to be cherished and to be fed with milk, learning something of its high calling, not able to do anything apart from Christ.

Then came a great endowment with **authority**. Peter had been told on a kindred occasion, Matt 16^{19}, that whatever he ordered and forbade should be ordered and forbidden by Divine authority. Shortly afterwards the same promise was extended to the local

congregation ; now substantially the same promise was extended to those who represented The Church Universal. It was not meant for Peter personally ; but as the earliest to base himself on the one foundation, he was taken as representative. It was not meant for those disciples in the upper room personally, to the exclusion of others in the same attitude of faith and obedience. It was not meant for any officers, to the exclusion of their fellow members. It was not meant for that generation alone. The Church, in so far as it was on earth, was a corporation with succession until Christ should come and take it complete to Himself. It was not meant for the members upon earth, irrespective of Divine guidance. In every case there is the condition expressed, and here it runs that when in possession of the gift of the Holy Spirit, their actions below should coincide with the Divine purpose.

This authority has nothing to do with defining doctrine. On each occasion it is concerned with **discipline.** All essential doctrine was given—germinally, at least—within a few years, and is enshrined in the New Testament; see comments on John 14^{26}, 16^{13}. But men burdened with sin need guidance and relief or warning. When Christ was upon earth, they could come to Him, and He could assure the penitent of forgiveness, the impenitent of judgement. He spoke with authority, and eased many aching hearts, or smote many that were hardened. Now that He was soon to go, He transferred this authority to His Church, commissioning it, when guided by the Holy Spirit, who can convince the world of sin and righteousness and judgement, to announce in His name remission of sins on repentance, but retention of sins to those who rejected Him.

20[30, 31]. The incidents narrated were chosen and grouped by John so as to produce faith and obtain life. He never mentioned that after the last supper our Lord instituted a new rite, and that after the resurrection He commanded baptism. Evidently these **ceremonies** were not in his eyes very important for the spiritual life; and his consistent silence about them in his other writings confirms the inference.

21[1–17]. While the verbal commission had been emphatic, it was supplemented by a gift which to thoughtful disciples symbolized the success of Christians in fishing for men under their Lord's guidance, and His provident care for their needs. Then to one who above all others might seem to have forfeited his place by a threefold denial, came a threefold testing and renewed charge to guard and strengthen all those won by the Good Shepherd.

ACTS

Acts 1^{5}. The former contrast between John's water baptism and the new Spirit baptism was reiterated. We have no evidence in 2^{41} or elsewhere that these first one hundred and twenty disciples were baptized in water, whether by John or by the earliest disciples of Jesus, John 4^{2}, or by one another. They were undoubtedly baptized in the Spirit, and their case, coupled with that of Cornelius, is awkward for a theory of **baptismal regeneration.**

1^{8}. **The Church** was constituted as a society of brethren, knit by allegiance to Jesus as their Lord; pledged to continue His work of spreading good news of salvation by His death, to aim at gathering those who accepted the news as learners, at enlisting them formally by baptism, at training them to a knowledge and performance of His will; commissioned to announce the terms of salvation with all authority, as the representative of Christ on earth. Formed with care during His ministry, it was born of the travail of His soul on Calvary, drew its first breath from the Holy Spirit on the day of resurrection, and was fed with pure milk during forty days as He spoke the things concerning the kingdom of God. A few days more, and energy should actuate every limb, as the Holy Spirit should come not with authority alone, but with power, and the work of salvation should begin on a new scale.

1$^{21-26}$. Peter's view of the qualifications of an **apostle** was, association with Jesus from the first, personal intercourse with Him since the resurrection, choice by Jesus; and the one duty he put in the forefront was to testify from his own knowledge as to the fact of the resurrection. On these terms the apostles must needs die out in a few score of years.

2$^{1-4}$. "They were all together": not only the apostles who are specified separately, 1^{26} and 2^{14}, but all, to the number of some one hundred and twenty, including the women, Mary, and the Lord's brethren. All were filled with the Holy Spirit, not simply the apostles.

It is a curious fact, that although the promise was made that the disciples should be **baptized in the Holy Spirit** within a few days, and although this was assuredly the fulfilment, the metaphor is not retained by the historian, who spoke of their being "filled with the Spirit." The one implies their being surrounded with the Spirit as by an all-encompassing atmosphere in which they lived and moved; the other, their being taken full possession of and thoroughly imbued by Him. Both agree in the conception of the completeness of the influence exercised on them by the Spirit. There is, however, a slight difference that deserves notice. Literal baptism can only be experienced once, and this Pentecostal experience was unique for each participant; only twice again do we hear of such an occurrence, and then not for these same people—once for Philip's converts, once at Cæsarea, on each occasion when Peter was present. It would seem as though these cases met the promise to Peter, and that he then used the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, in Judæa, and Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth as represented by a Gentile city. He initiated the work,

he was the human agent in liberating the power from on high to these successive classes. The same people could afterwards have a revival, and be filled with the Spirit again, 4[8, 31], but not be baptized again. The power of God is now abroad in the world for those who will to receive. So it is unscriptural to speak of a man or a church being baptized afresh in the Spirit: one baptism, many infillings; or, better still, one baptism, ever full, 6[3], 7[55].

2[17, 18]. It is rather painful to turn to an argument of another kind—that the Spirit is said to be **poured** forth; and therefore the word Baptize means here, at least, Pour. It is a poor case that relies on figures of speech; but even this falls into line with the others. If all the house in which they were sitting was filled by the Spirit poured forth upon them, they were assuredly immersed in the Spirit. It is more profitable to observe that they were thoroughly, not partially, under the influence of the Spirit, 2[4]. Further, that all those baptized in the Spirit were of an age to prophesy or do something for the Lord.

2[38]. Repent for the remission of sins—such was the older message of all the prophets: Be baptized, this was the addition of John: In the name of **Jesus as Messiah**, here was the new note: Then you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit; and so the promise of the old prophet rounded off the whole. The speech had aimed at proving that God had made the crucified Jesus not only Lord and Master, but also Messiah; the acknowledgement of this fact was required by a rite symbolizing the burial and resurrection of that crucified Jesus, with words recognizing Him as Messiah, Son of God. Such was at least one addition to the meaning attached by John to his baptism.

To suppose that Peter meant baptism was now an extra condition before sins were remitted, is to represent him as making salvation harder than the prophets had done, or than John had done, or than Christ had done. The words do not require such a meaning, and all the analogy of other offers of salvation forbids it. His own explanation in I Pet 3^{21} carefully excludes it.

2^{39}. The promise by Joel was now and henceforth to be fulfilled, that the Spirit should be poured forth on all, who should prophesy or dream or see visions, and that whoever called on the Lord should be saved. For centuries it had lain dormant; now it was to take effect, for the hearers, for all future generations, and for all distant peoples.

To your children. This evidently referred to the sons and daughters mentioned by Joel, of an age to prophesy. The reference was not limited to the literal children of the hearers, but was to widen the promise from those who heard to all their **successors**; compare Deut 29^{29}, Isa 44^{3}, 54^{13}. When, a few days later, Peter called the people Sons of the prophets, or wrote in his epistles of Obedient children, Cursed children, he was not thinking of literal parentage, but of ethical likeness. Paul at Antioch in Pisidia called all his generation Children of the fathers. The word very rarely is to be taken literally, and there is a separate word for little children. The occasion forbids such a sense being given here, and the fact that they who received his word were baptized shows how it was understood.

From the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel the truth had been proclaimed that each man stood or fell irrespective of his ancestry. The Lord had insisted greatly on the value of the individual. To read into Peter's words an invitation for a father to believe, and

obtain the promise for himself and his **infants**, was to forget all recent teaching and to pass over such obvious facts as that the advice was given, Be baptized, every one of you, Save yourselves. Intelligent hearers were addressed, and were not exhorted to bring unintelligent infants for some ceremony.

2[41]. Jerusalem had much water stored within and without the walls. The pools of Gihon, Joab's Well, Siloam, En-rogel lay in the southern valleys; the pools of Hezekiah and Bethesda were in the city. John tells us how one of these was available for any one to wash in, 9[7], and how another was used habitually for bathing, 5[1–7]. Modern excavators have described other large public reservoirs and numberless domestic cisterns.

The actual performance of the act of baptism was as a rule left to inferiors; Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His **disciples**. Peter at Cæsarea ordered that Cornelius and his friends should be baptized; Paul only baptized a very few at Corinth. The great work was preaching, and once that was done by the apostles, sent for the purpose, the mere baptizing might be handed over to others. There were about one hundred and twenty disciples, and with all deductions for apostles, women, and young people, we may surely reckon that thirty were available. The strength of these would not be heavily taxed to baptize a hundred each, especially according to the mode still employed in the East, where the candidate stands in water chest high, and bends beneath the water, the administrator doing little more than place a hand on the head. There was ample time for the ceremony, as was shown by a similar scene on July 3, 1878, in India, when 2,222 Telugus were immersed in eight hours by six administrators, working two at a time.

2^{42}. Here were illustrated the four elements of early **Church life.** First, **teaching** by the apostles, who thus carried out another part of the commission from the Lord, and unfolded the scriptures as they themselves had been taught.

Second, a habit of **association** together as having common benefits, aims, and hopes. This chiefly expressed itself in contribution for the poor, even as the Lord in His poverty had instituted a poor-bag. The English word Fellowship here is too vague, and does not express the practical nature of the daily ministration that obtained at once, 4^{35}, 6^{1}. This duty of contribution was greatly insisted on in each congregation, Heb 13^{16}, I Tim 6^{18}; was urged as a mark of fraternal fellowship, Gal 2^{10}; and Paul wrote about it repeatedly, Rom 12^{13}, 15^{26}; II Cor 8^{4}, 9^{13}; Gal 6^{6}, taking great pains to promote brotherly feeling between different congregations. Another form of this contribution was in line with our Lord's habit of accepting hospitality for all His disciples and with His directions for showing it, Luke 14$^{12-14}$; and so there arose daily social meals. These were a common device to express and develope corporate feeling. Jews were accustomed to join in a feast of thanksgiving and peace after an atoning sacrifice, Lev 3.

Third, the **Lord's supper.** To the meal proper they would readily add the new rites of breaking bread and drinking wine together in memory of the great sacrifice on Calvary; and they settled down to a daily observance after the preaching in the temple, 2^{46}. Apparently they took most literally our Lord's words, I Cor 11^{25}, Do this as often as you drink, in remembrance of Me.

Fourth, **Public worship** by the brotherhood. They

did not abandon the temple, where pilgrims were constantly to be found, and where the broad colonnades provided space for many to hear the good news; there they did their evangelistic work. But it was obvious that the new wine needed new skins, the old forms could no longer express their joy and their needs. Even the synagogues, with all their reading of those scriptures which testified of Jesus, afforded no sufficient outlet for their devotion; so regular prayers arose, and gave their distinctive name to the new worship.

Formal definitions are seldom given in scripture, which teaches rather by example. But seeing what were the peculiarities of these brethren, acting under apostolic guidance, we may surely say that any body is a church of the Lord Jesus Christ which is composed of baptized believers, who take as their standard of life the New Testament, who devote themselves to caring for the bodies and souls of others, and whose worship includes the Lord's supper and prayer. And we may at least say that any body which fails to follow apostolic precedent, in any of these matters, falls short of realizing apostolic ideals.

4^{18-20} Here is a good precedent to help understand where **obedience** is due. Our Lord had bidden deference be paid to those who sat in Moses' seat, and He had paid it when accused; but He had warned that, while some things are due to Cæsar, others are due to God. This was a crucial case. He had since claimed all authority, and had in the same breath ordered Peter and John to make disciples. Nothing whatever could override such a direct command. The Sanhedrin did not simply say that the temple was reserved for the established religion, and bid them seek other places for their dissenting preaching; nor on the plea of public

order forbid street preaching in business hours; but flatly forbade the new developement, whether evangelizing or teaching. So there was nothing to do but say respectfully the command was invalid, and would be disregarded. Compare 5[20, 29].

5[11]. Here, for the first time in history, as distinct from our Lord's words, we come upon the word **church**; for it was a mistake to insert it at 2[47]. Even here, however, it is used by Luke, writing years after, and not by any one speaking at the time. The early phrases were vague: Their own company, Thy bond-servants, The multitude of them that believed, The disciples, The multitude of the disciples. Presently they showed a preference for The Way, 9[2], 19[9, 23], 24[14, 22], though their enemies called them a sect, 24[14]. Then in Jewish circles James spoke of a Synagogue; but the general title used was that which Luke naturally employed here, Church, or, in Greek, Ecclesia.

The church at Jerusalem, even when it numbered five thousand, still met as a whole on occasion, and acted as a whole, 4[23, 35], 6[1—6], 15[4, 22]; but for the daily worship the brethren assembled in different private houses, 2[46], 8[3], 12[12], and the little band habitually meeting in a home does not seem at Jerusalem to have taken the title of church. On the contrary, the name was for a time stretched to cover all the believers throughout Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, 9[31]. Not until a distinctly Gentile community was formed at Antioch do we hear of a second church, 11[26], 13[1]. But its daughter communities soon took the title, 14[23, 27], 1 Th 1[1], and the local usage was thus established in accordance with the Greek conception of one Ecclesia to each city. Paul then spoke of the churches of God which are in Judæa, 1 Th 2[14].

As the churches increased, it seems to have been Paul's custom to **group** them according to the existing civil divisions, so that we hear of the churches of Syria and Cilicia, of Macedonia, of Achaia, of Asia, of Galatia. The only known exception to this custom was at Rome before he visited it; there we read not of the church at Rome, but of the church in the house of Prisca and Aquila, and of other little groups, whose mention is followed by a warning against divisions, Rom 16^{3-17}. Facts like these deserve more attention than they generally receive from Independents and Baptists. Paul would understand County Associations or a Union or Convention of all the churches in a civil area; but for him to find six or eight churches in a town of the size of Boston or Richmond would be something novel. Convenience of worship might dictate several meeting-houses; but he apparently knew only one managing committee for all the Christians in one city, and gave the term church to the whole body.

On the other hand, while he encouraged alliances of churches, he did not regard any alliance as a church; still less did he write so loftily as to the Ephesians about any alliance. Such groups are desirable; but though they attract even a third of all living Christians, nay, if they could gather into one all living Christians, the term **The Church** is too large for anything but the whole body of believers everywhere and of all times. When what is said of this glorious Body is transferred without question to the Anglican federation, or the older Roman, or the oldest Greek, grave mistakes are sure to be made.

6^{1-6}. With the growth of the church, organization became necessary. In the East local affairs are managed by a committee of the seniors. From the

earliest times we read of natural leaders as **Elders**, Ex 3[16]; they represented the people in confessing sin, Lev 4[15], received the Spirit to prophesy, Num 11[25]. But chiefly they were a business committee, Deut 25[7], Jud 8[14], I Kings 21[11], II Kings 10[1], specially concerned with judging and administering in each city, Deut 19[12], 25[8]; Ruth 4[2].

In apostolic times every Jewish city had its elders, acting as a modern town council, superintending baths, roads, lighting, markets, public buildings, education, worship, charity, and all other public purposes. Those at Jerusalem, in conjunction with the chief priests, managed all national affairs within limits prescribed by Rome, Matt 16[21], 21[23], 26-28; Acts 4[5, 8, 23], 6[12], 22[5], 23[14], 24[1], 25[15]. But every city had its local council of elders, Matt 10[17], Luke 7[3]. They numbered seven in the smallest community, according to the Mishna and to Josephus, who even imagined this had been the case from the time of Moses, Wars II 20[5], Ant IV 8[14, 38]. All officials were apparently appointed by them, such as alms collectors (who, according to the Mishna, numbered two or three), schoolmasters, beadle, conductors of public worship. At some place in Palestine and at Corinth there was only one of these last, technically called Rulers of the Synagogue, Luke 13[14], Acts 18[8, 17]. At Capernaum and at Antioch there were several, Mark 5[22], Acts 13[15]. Except at public worship, they had no superiority over the elders, and need not even be elders.

Now the followers of Jesus were being shut out from the mass of the Jews, John 9[22], Acts 5[13]; so they were compelled to organize separately. They would naturally adopt familiar methods, and so the apostles advised the choice of seven reputable pious and wise

men to conduct their business. No title is mentioned here, but at 11[30] and 21[18] we hear thrice of the elders receiving money from Paul for the poor of Jerusalem, and the elders are mentioned thrice in chapter 15; so that the old name was soon given to them.

There is no evidence that at Jerusalem they were ever called Deacons—a name hardly appropriated by Jews to officers, but given to menial servants, Mark 9[35], John 2[9]. And when Canon Bruce, in his generally admirable sketch of Apostolic Order and Unity, argues that the organization of the synagogue was closely reproduced in the Christian Ecclesia, he slightly misapprehends its nature and so overstates a good case: for he supposes only one president; transfers to him the title Sheliach, which rather refers to the beadle, Neander, Planting 34, or even to any man called up to pray, Schürer II 2[67]; confounds the men of leisure with the alms collectors, and identifies these with the officers now under discussion.

6[6]. The method of appointment was simple; the whole multitude chose, and the apostles installed by prayer and **laying on of hands.** This last action was as ancient as when the Israelites appointed the Levites to the service of Jehovah, Num 8[9–12], or when Moses appointed Joshua to be general, Num 27[15–23]. Confusion has arisen as to its meaning, since hands could be laid on a man for other purposes, in enmity, 5[18], for healing, 28[8], to invoke the gift of the Holy Spirit, 8[17]. But all these purposes are out of the question here; the seven were friends, not ill, and already full of the Spirit. The act was the ordinary method for admitting new members to the Sanhedrin, or council of elders, Schürer II 1[177], and was naturally adopted to instal the first Nazarene elders. It soon passed

into ordinary use even in Gentile Christian churches, Acts 13³; I Tim 4¹⁴, 5²²; II Tim 1⁶. In the case of Timothy a spiritual gift was simultaneously conferred; but these gifts have long died out, I Cor 13⁸. Those who imagine that they can now confer spiritual grace by this act had better try first if they can confer in the same way bodily grace, *i.e.* healing, Mark 2⁹.

In this election we see a **joint action** of the local church, and of the apostles representing the whole body of believers. In the selection of Matthias there was apparently the same co-operation, though with further ceremony. On all similar occasions there was at the outset some such concurrence, Acts 8¹⁴, 11¹, ¹², ²², 14²³; Rom 1¹¹; I Tim 3 ¹⁻¹³, 5¹⁷⁻²¹; Titus 1⁵. On New Testament principles and precedents no church is entitled to act alone, even in ordaining to the local ministry.

6⁸. There was no thought of limiting the **conduct of worship** to any one; business might be entrusted to the seven, while the apostles confined themselves to prayer and preaching; but Stephen did not suppose himself excluded from preaching, too, and Philip shortly followed his example. It was doubtless not at Corinth only that in meeting every one might contribute something to the worship, and in public every one might speak for his Master, 8⁴.

6¹³, ¹⁴. Stephen seems to have been the first who discerned the radical character of the work of Christ; he announced that the temple was now superfluous and might be destroyed, since the one perfect sacrifice had been offered on the altar of the cross, and that the Jewish peculiarities or **traditional customs** need no longer be observed. Whether he himself drew the full conclusion that the whole Law was superseded

is not clear: his two references to it point rather the other way. Perhaps only his logical opponents saw that such was the inevitable implication in his arguments. One man in the synagogue of the Cilicians, Saul of Tarsus, grasped the conclusion, and though now he recoiled from it horror-stricken, he repeated it at Antioch in Pisidia, and developed it most powerfully in a circular letter to the Galatians.

8[12, 13]. The Samaritans believed Philip about Jesus; it is not said that they believed in Jesus. From the sequel it is clear that there was something defective in the experience of some, especially of Simon. **Intellectual assent** may be given to a series of propositions without any appropriate action following. Even demons believe, but do not repent; they only tremble.

8[14–17]. What was lacking was soon made evident; even if some of them were far enough advanced to have entrusted themselves to Jesus as their Lord, they had not yet any **power from on high**. They were passive, not yet active. A similar fault is often to be seen still—devotion unaccompanied by service, or perhaps even activity devoid of manifest blessing. These are not the only types of imperfect Christians, but they are serious. Three things only were done to round them off towards perfection; they were taught better, they were prayed for, they had the apostle's hands laid on them. With thorough teaching from the outset, with believing prayer and with that symbolic assurance of new life that baptism gives, there is no reason to-day why any should hang ambiguously short of the full blessing meant for all. The case of the Samaritans was perhaps permitted to occur, not that Philip was incompetent, but that Peter might have the promise fulfilled, and use the keys of the kingdom

for the Samaritans who had heard of that kingdom and Messiah from another.

8¹⁸—²⁴. Simon saw wonderful effects following this **laying on of the apostles' hands.** That differed in purpose from their induction of Philip, and certainly no such effect and no such purpose can be achieved to-day in the material sphere, and apparently none such in the spiritual. It was not, however, impossible that Simon might have had imparted to him the power to produce like effects; but he evidently sought it for his own glory, not the glory of God or the good of others. Here, then, is a sad case, showing that even belief and baptism—and possibly even the prayers and laying on of hands of good men—are quite compatible with continuance in or relapse into bondage to iniquity. The case of Judas shows the inadequacy of repentance apart from trust in Christ; the case of Simon shows the inadequacy of a species of belief and baptism apart from repentance.

8³⁵, ³⁶. Philip's preaching Jesus evidently included a statement of the order of Jesus that those who believed in Him should profess that belief in **baptism.**

It has been pointed out that the way from Jerusalem to Gaza is expressly said to be desert, and argued that any water in a desert would be scanty and sufficient only for sprinkling. This overlooks that in Matt 14¹³ we find Jesus went by boat to a desert. One road from Jerusalem to Gaza crosses several brooks and skirts the Mediterranean. But modern travellers say that even under the present misrule, neither road can be regarded as desert, and the adjective is more likely to refer to the town. Gaza had been destroyed and was deserted; a New Gaza sprang up on the coast, and when after awhile the old site was reoccupied,

it was called Desert Gaza. Compare Fen Ditton and Wood Ditton, Hartford and New Hartford. If this be the meaning of the phrase, that they were on the road to Desert Gaza, there is no room to raise any difficulty.

8[37]. This verse was not penned by Luke, but was interpolated long afterwards. It may be good evidence what was the custom in the churches when it was inserted, but is no evidence as to what Philip required or the eunuch did. The true narrative implies that a request for baptism raises a strong presumption of faith; and if Philip had perhaps been mistaken lately on this point, he was now safeguarded by the direction of the Holy Spirit.

8[38, 39]. There can be no doubt what Philip did to the eunuch. If we did not know independently that Baptize meant **Immerse**, that would be suggested by the remarks that both went down into the water and that they came up out of the water. To attach rare meanings to all these words is quite possible; but by a similar needless process the meaning of any passage in literature can be ruined.

9[10]. Ananias was only "a certain disciple,"—no word of any office or of any special endowment; yet for the most important convert to be admitted, the agent chosen was just one of the many who flit across the scene once only.

9[31]. This is the only passage where there is any ambiguity as to the meaning of the word **church**. It is apparently to be taken in its larger sense: The Church Universal had peace in the whole of Judæa and Galilee and Samaria. The construction, however, is unparalleled in the New Testament, and it is not surprising that a scribe altered it to read, The churches.

It is, however, noteworthy that there is no sign yet of any other body of elders than that already elected, and it is possible that in all the country towns accustomed to look up to Jerusalem, the local disciples attempted no separate organization, but regarded themselves as members of the one and only new Congregation of Jehovah, which had headquarters at the religious capital. At Damascus the disciples were apparently still members of the old "orthodox" synagogues, $9^{2, 20}$; at Lydda and Joppa we read of saints and disciples, but not of a church. Even many years later we only read of disciples at Tyre, brethren at Ptolemais, not of a church or elders there or at Cæsarea. In favour of this supposition it may be noted that Jerusalem was in civil matters supreme over the eleven divisions of Judæa, and was responsible for the tribute from the whole province, Josephus, Wars II 17^{1}, III 3^{5}. Similarly we learn from the Talmud that the elders of Jerusalem used to visit the towns of Judæa for civil and religious jurisdiction. It would be very natural, then, that the Nazarene Jews should retain this custom and regard all in the province of Judæa, if not also those in Samaria and Galilee, as belonging to the church at Jerusalem. Thus we can understand readily how Philip, an elder of Jerusalem, presently went to live at Cæsarea, 21^{8}. See note on 5^{11}.

$10^{9-16, 28}$. Evidently until this time Peter had regarded **The Law** as still binding on him, and was now reluctant to break it, even at the direct bidding of his Lord. He was referred to the old declaration that there was no real defilement in anything edible, Mark 7^{15-19}, and two days later he drew the corollary that the same principle held as to the abolition of distinctions

between men. That The Law as a whole was obsolete had not yet come home to him, nor was he even certain of his ground on this one point; compare Gal 2[12].

10[44–48]. This is the only case recorded when the Holy Spirit descended on men before verbal profession and baptism. But it is quite clear and definite; and when neither the six brethren from Joppa nor the whole church at Jerusalem could object, we must recognize that the Holy Spirit is not limited by outward acts. **Regeneration** is not the consequence nor the accompaniment of baptism; here it precedes it.

It is equally clear that **baptism** is incumbent on the believer; Peter did not wait to preach it at length, nor for a request from Cornelius and his friends, but he ordered that they should be baptized.

The phrase might possibly mean, He commanded them to be baptized; but in 8[38] the corresponding translation, He commanded the chariot to stand still, is evidently a mistake or a clumsy way of saying, He commanded that the chariot should stand still. It is possible here that Peter spoke directly to Cornelius, and ordered him to be baptized; it is more probable that he spoke again to the six men from Joppa whom he had just addressed, and ordered them to baptize the first Gentile converts.

He opened the door by preaching; the mere act of baptism was for others. Moreover, while at verse [45] we read of Jews as "they of the circumcision," a phrase found also at 11[2]; Rom 3[30], 4[9, 12]; Gal 2[7–12]; Col 4[11]; Titus 1[10], yet so little was baptism regarded as vital, and so little was it opposed to circumcision, that the phrase "they of the baptism" is quite unknown. At most Paul said, "We are the (true) circumcision," Ph 3[3].

11[3]. Compare Gal 2[12].

11⁴⁻¹⁸. Peter did not try to overbear them by **authority**, but explained the circumstances fully to his brother apostles and the brethren generally, and was careful to bring witnesses to his story. Here is no autocratic ruling, but a spirit of reasonableness and brotherly submission. . .

11³, ²², ²⁷. The church in Jerusalem evidently felt a sort of responsibility and headship, to oversee every extension, guard it from error and guide it aright. This is more strongly marked in the events at Antioch. If Jerusalem had remained, or the church at Jerusalem had maintained a continuity, it is evident from certain early romances what a terrible **Papacy** would have developed there, with most specious claims to reverence from all other churches.

11²⁶. Here is the first mention of any other company than that at Jerusalem, taking the title of church.

Here, too, is the first mention of that title for the followers of Jesus, which has become the best known. Not chosen by the disciples, but a nickname coined by the wits of Antioch, it has yet been accepted as truly expressive. It is curious to find one modern species of Christians disusing all modern titles to put forth a semi-exclusive claim to this, as Biblical!

11³⁰. Compare 2⁴² and 6¹⁻⁶.

12¹⁷. James, the brother of Jesus, was already acquiring that eminent position that soon made him the natural chairman of a meeting in which there were apostles present, and that, in legend, was exaggerated into a rule over the apostles.

13¹. There is no mention of any officers in the church at Antioch, but there were gifted men serving it for spiritual ends. A **prophet** was apparently, as in Old Covenant times, a man directly empowered to

speak for God, or inspired; his message might be of present duty or of future events. These prophets, like the apostles, were very influential in the early age of the churches, but gradually the gift of revelation was withdrawn, and prophets died out.

13[2]. Saul had long ago received a **direct commission** from the Lord, first outside Damascus, to be a witness of the resurrection, 26[16], and again in the temple, to go to the Gentiles, 22[21]. Hitherto he had exercised this ministry chiefly in Tarsus and Antioch. Barnabas is not said to have received any such direct commission, but had been sent by the mother church to see to the work at Antioch. The two men were therefore on different levels: to Saul this was only a public recognition by a church of his call to the itinerant ministry, and a direction to exercise it elsewhere; to Barnabas it was probably the first call from the Spirit, essentially direct, even if coupled with a message to the church, and it may have been the first intimation that he, too, was to be a travelling evangelist.

The direct call from God was supplemented by a recognition from the church. Comparatively few churches act on this precedent when a man to-day feels called to be a foreign missionary, though it is often applied to the remoter case of a call to the home ministry.

13[3]. Prayer and laying on of hands were usual at investing a man with solemn duties, and they are common to-day. **Fasting** here accompanied. It is nowhere ordered for permanent observance, but may find support from our Lord's words, Mark 2[20], and from Apostolic precedent. So long as it is not undertaken in the spirit of mere ceremonialism, condemned repeatedly by the prophets, it can do no harm. There

are many who may find help in the spiritual life by foregoing temptations to indulge lusts of the flesh.

13[14, 15, 42–44]. Not only at Jerusalem, 6[8–10], but generally we see that Christian preachers habitually used the opportunities offered by the **synagogue worship**, following the example and anticipations of their Master, Mark 1[21], 13[9].

This worship was **customary**, not statutory. There is nothing in The Law that enjoined it. But after the return from captivity in Babylon, when the local high places were not revived, and sacrificial worship was strictly confined to Jerusalem, some provision was advisable for local needs. Gradually the custom became universal that the elders of every town built a school and provided a schoolmaster; that they transacted public business in this school; that public worship was held in the school every Monday, Thursday, and Saturday, the service on the sabbath being the chief; that they appointed one or more rulers of this synagogue who should preside at worship. The temple worship was unique, official, conducted by paid hereditary officers; the synagogue worship was wherever ten Jews could bring their families together, voluntary, democratic in management and execution.

The worship was carefully **distinguished from that of the temple.** There the congregation stood in the open air; here sat within doors. There the authorized visible furniture included a bath and an altar of masonry, though the priests also saw a table for provisions, a lamp-stand, and a gilded altar; here the customary furniture was on a platform, where the chairman presided, and there were prominent seats for the chief men, with a reading-desk, an alms-box, some trumpets and lamps, and, above all, a bookcase for the rolls of

scripture. There the priests offered sacrifices and the Levites chanted psalms with the help of a grand orchestra, while the worshippers looked on; here the priests had only the slight privileges of priority in reading and of pronouncing the blessing, while the ruler invited men to read a long lesson from The Law and a short one from the Prophets, or to lead in the customary prayers, or to speak on any religious topic they chose. Evidently the early Christian worship developed from the voluntary democratic Biblical worship of the synagogue; the temple worship was a series of shadowy ceremonies pointing to the propitiatory work of Christ, and unworthy of perpetuation after He had actually made atonement.

The **status of** Jewish-Christian **missionaries** in a synagogue is noteworthy. As Jews they would be welcomed at once into the congregation; if apparently educated, they might often be invited, as in the case of Jesus at Nazareth, or Paul and Barnabas here, to take part in the service and give an address. In accepting the invitation they acknowledged the authority of the Jewish colony, exercised through the local elders; and therefore, if they failed to convince the majority, they were liable to be tried as heretics, and condemned either to be beaten, to be excommunicated, or even to be stoned as blasphemers. The Romans allowed any sentence short of death to be inflicted by the elders on a Jew who admitted their jurisdiction, and so it came to pass that Paul could soon say he had been scourged five times, II Cor 11[24]. The central Sanhedrin at Jerusalem could pass resolutions binding on the local elders everywhere, John 9[22]; had once commissioned Paul to root out heresy at Damascus, and was accustomed to dispatch circular letters or special agents on

grave questions, so that Jewish-Christian missionaries might find whole colonies forewarned against them, Acts 28[21]. But generally they could try to leaven and win the community, and, if failing in that, could organize their adherents, when excommunicated, into a new synagogue or church, 18[7], 19[9]. Of course, from the standpoint of the old "orthodox" Jews, they were at first heretics, dissenting from the doctrines evolved from The Law and enshrined in the traditions, and blossomed forth into schismatic separatists, openly blaspheming God. Jesus knew the difficulties felt by men trained on the old lines, and long bore gently with their hard words, Luke 5[39].

13[16, 43, 48]. The synagogues were open to the Gentiles, and many were so far convinced of the superiority of the Jewish system to their own paganism that they voluntarily followed many Jewish customs and adopted many Jewish beliefs. They have their modern representatives in men of India, unable to believe their Hindu mythology, attracted by Christ, yet unwilling to break utterly with their caste by baptism.

13[39]. This was the first announcement by Paul of his radical attitude towards the **Jewish Law**; his attention having been turned to the matter by Stephen, the three years' retreat gave him opportunity to think out the revelation he received direct from on high and pursue it to all its consequences. A full exposition was afterwards made of this theme to these and other readers in the epistle to the Galatians.

14[23]. The true translation here would seem to be: "And when we had in each church **appointed** for ourselves **elders** by show of hands, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom

they had believed." It is often overlooked that in 14[22] Luke quietly indicated his presence by the first of the "We" passages which elsewhere are recognized as betokening his personal intervention. The sermon at Pisidian Antioch was fully reported, 13[16–41], though there was nothing special in the occasion or in it; the interest was apparently for Luke, who then heard it. The next of the "We" passages is at 16[10], just after Paul had passed through Galatia.

This verse may, however, be translated: "And when they had in each church appointed for themselves elders by show of hands, etc." In either case we need to recognize two things: the popular election, as in II Cor 8[19]; and the installing by the missionaries. Each church was organized as a democracy, but no church was purely independent even on such a local matter. It was not long before Paul sent a letter jointly to all these Galatians, so rapidly did he develope first disciples, then four churches, then a sort of Galatian association.

15[1]. If it had occurred to anybody that Christian **baptism** replaced circumcision, all this trouble could never have arisen. As the matter ran the gauntlet of two large churches, with men of the calibre of Paul, Barnabas, Peter, and James, and this supposed substitution or equivalence was not hinted at, though it was exactly in the line of Peter's argument, 15[7–11], we may reckon that it is a mistake. As it was, the doctrine propounded was the crassest form of **sacramentalism**, that salvation hinged on a ceremony.

15[2]. This conference is of great interest. But from the account given by Luke it appears that many views could be taken of it. It might be a brotherly talk between representatives of two churches, or a

request to a sister church to disown certain doctrines put forth by its members, or an appeal from an inferior church to a court of plenary authority. From the tone of the letter, "the apostles and the elders, brethren," evidently thought they were Divinely empowered to lay a burden on the others; probably they had in mind the gift to The Church at large of **authority to bind and loose**, and did not consider it necessary to call into council any others than the officers at Jerusalem. Paul's view of the matter was probably given in Gal 2, and proved to be very different.

The order of events appears to be this: Peter was visiting Antioch, and at first fell in with local customs and repeated his conduct in the case of Cornelius, eating with the Gentile Christians. Other Jewish Christians from Jerusalem, perhaps with letters of commendation from James, refused to eat with those who were uncircumcised, declaring that circumcision was necessary to salvation. They succeeded in splitting the church, drawing off into their clique Peter and even one of its teachers, Barnabas. Paul thereupon openly put it to Peter that for all his compliance with The Law in this one particular, yet in a hundred others he tacitly neglected The Law, and, judged from the strict Pharisaic standpoint, was a man not knowing The Law, accursed, living as the Gentiles did; it was therefore absurd to try to persuade the Gentile-Christians to a similar observance of a few precepts of The Law, which could only be partial at best. Paul may have quoted the recent letter of James, that whoever keeps the whole Law and yet offends in one point is guilty of all. But as the question was not personal nor local, it was desirable to obtain general agreement, and the argument was pursued at Jerusalem. A private

conference of Paul and Barnabas with James, Peter, and John brought about unanimity, and a public meeting was held of the apostles and elders of Jerusalem in the presence of the whole local church, when the question was debated, Peter re-stating Paul's argument to him even more emphatically, and appealing to one unmistakable precedent; Barnabas and Paul giving new and relevant facts; James adducing an argument from prophecy, and proposing a compromise, which was adopted and ratified by the whole church; then a circular letter was forwarded throughout the districts where the dispute had arisen.

15[2, 4, 6, 12, 22, 23]. There was evidently a tendency to a **ruling eldership** at Jerusalem, for the multitude chiefly kept silence, were just mentioned once as being pleased with the compromise, and were not mentioned in the letter, which was headed with greetings from "The apostles and elders, brethren," though a later scribe with Greek democratic usage softened it by inserting "and"; compare, however, 16[4].

If the apostles and elders overshadowed the church generally, **James** towered out above all. The malcontents at Antioch appealed to his name; he had lately acted as a patriarch or head of a Nazarene Sanhedrin, and sent out a general epistle to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. If such were the reverence he excited at a distance, it was not less at Jerusalem. He was named by Paul before Peter and John; he waited to sum up the debate, and announced his "judgement," not his "opinion." The word implies a final sentence and decision, and differs from that in I Cor 7[6, 25]. And it was accepted as final; the authoritative letter simply re-states his verdict.

The tone of **authority** in this letter was recognized

at once, 16^4; the apostles and elders had ordained decrees as binding as those of Cæsar, 17^7. So when we remember the subsequent troubles raised at Corinth by people apparently claiming some countenance from James, and the fact that Paul introduced the treasurers from his city churches to James, in the presence of the elders, 21^18; if we read what Josephus wrote of his life and death, remember that his relative, Symeon, stepped into a similar situation of influence after his death, and that a century later a Jewish-Christian of the Jerusalem church went round inspecting the churches and being satisfied with their orthodoxy—then it is clear that the tendency to lordship is very deeply rooted, and needed all the emphatic warnings of our Lord and of Peter.

15^5, 10, 24, 29. The issue was plainly raised whether keeping **The Law** in general or being circumcised in particular was incumbent on **Gentile Christians.** The duty of Jewish Christians was not decided. But Peter was very plain-spoken, and stigmatized The Law as an unbearable yoke. James avoided giving any opinion on the point; but recognizing the fulfilment of the promise that out of the Gentiles, as Gentiles, not transformed into Jews, God would choose a people, he pronounced for exacting only a few points of special interest as terms of communion. The people who had misused his name were disavowed, and it was placed on record that by Divine and human authority The Law was not obligatory on Gentile Christians. Even James admitted that it would have been a troublesome burden to them.

15^28, 29. What, then, were the **concessions** exacted? Not to eat food offered in sacrifice to idols, nor blood, nor things strangled, and not to commit fornication.

These things were all forbidden in The Law, but they would not have struck most men as the most important items in it. Noah was representative of all men, Gentile as well as Jew, and the commands given to him forbade eating blood, but otherwise do not touch this, according to Gen 9, apart from tradition.

The discussion had arisen out of joint meals, and so the decision referred largely to diet. A gentleman to-day who was entertaining a Hindu would not place beef on his table, even for his own use, nor pork, if a Muhammadan were his guest. A similar feeling seems to account for three stipulations here; such cases are dealt with carefully in I Cor 10 and Rom 14: 'Avoid paining us Jews by a bill of fare including dishes that revolt us, and we can sit down to eat with you.' The other point refers to a matter on which Gentile public opinion was just about dead; Romans objected to murder, Greeks to theft, Persians to lying, but few objected to male unchastity.

It is noteworthy that no one seems to have suggested: 'Take the **Ten Commandments**; they are of permanent value.' It cannot be that in this Jewish assembly they were ignored and flouted; they cannot have been regarded by Peter and James as 'a yoke that no Jew ever could bear, a burden with which Gentiles need not be troubled.' But James had already seen the true relation of these to Christ's word, and had accepted His verdict that all needful direction on moral points was summed up in "the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," Jas 2^{8-12}. What he did here was to draw out from that law of liberty four corollaries important under the existing circumstances.

Modern public opinion sets aside two of these

directions as obsolete; within a few years Paul gave the reason for them, and when the reason ceases to exist, the prohibition may be neglected. When the reason revives, the prohibition revives, too. This is a good instance of the difficulty inherent in detailed legislation; circumstances alter cases so often that a rule which is minute and unmistakable is very apt to grow inapplicable, and therefore a burden to the memory or the conscience. The one binding law for all time is general, **Do to others as you wish them to do to you**: that is given by Christ Himself, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit may always be invoked to apply it to any particular case. These decisions were soon regarded as out of date; the letter was faithfully delivered to the Gentile churches in Syria and Cilicia, and also to those in Galatia; but when similar questions arose in Galatia and Achaia, neither side appealed to it, while Paul argued out the matter from first principles, for which we may rejoice.

16[3, 4, 13]. Paul showed his good faith by obeying The Law for himself and a young semi-Jew, and by circulating the recent concordat.

16[13, 14, 15, 40]. Synagogues or Places of prayer—the names were interchangeable, Schürer II 2[68–73]—were often built by the river side for convenience in the ceremonial ablutions. In this case the convenience was great for baptism.

This incident has no bearing on the question of admitting **infants** to baptism until it is shown that Lydia was married, that she had children, that some of them were infants, that these infants were with her. No information is given on any one of these points. The probabilities are that as she is mentioned far from home she was unmarried or a widow; her household

would at least include, if it did not consist of, servants helping in her business—the brethren whom Paul and Silas comforted before departure. The word "household" is rarely restricted to children and grandchildren; it may mean all descendants to remote generations, as in Luke 1[27, 69]—an impossible meaning here, but more generally covers all residents in the literal house, Luke 10[5], or all dependents on the householder, such as the three hundred and eighteen men able to fight, born in the house of Abram, compare I Tim 3[12]. But it is impossible to prove that there were or were not infants in Lydia's household.

16[29–34]. The jailor showed his repentance by his taking Paul and Silas out of prison; the next thing was to excite faith. Preaching to him and all in his house made them all believe, so all were baptized.

There is no reason to doubt that in a public building like a jail, or in his private house, there would be facilities for bathing.

18[12–17]. Gallio had a very just idea of the **duty of the State** to protect every man in the free exercise of his religion. So long as Paul reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, he was within Jewish jurisdiction, and might be censured or scourged. When he set up a separate meeting next door, he was outside their reach; and though in his company he numbered an ex-ruler of the synagogue who with all his house had believed, yet most of his adherents were Gentiles, who had believed and were baptized. The only recourse the Jews could have was to violence or the Roman law, and the proconsul now declared that the Roman law took no cognizance of such cases. This was a decision of great importance, and in the few years that elapsed before it was reversed in the highest

court, it stood as a charter of freedom; and Paul took full advantage of it at once.

18²⁴—19⁷. Here are two cases contrasting **John's baptism** with Christian baptism. Apollos was eloquent, knew his Bible, had been catechized in the teaching of Jesus, and was earnest and spiritual in teaching. But when he spoke in the synagogue, however boldly, Priscilla and Aquila recognized a defect, and expounded to him the Way more carefully. After that we hear of his taking a more advanced position, no longer speaking in the synagogue as an "orthodox" yet open-minded teacher, but publicly confuting the Jews. Nor was this due simply to the more advanced knowledge in Corinth; something must be due to his proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah. That Luke does not mention whether or no he was re-baptized shows how little importance he attached to the matter.

The other case has one ambiguous passage. It is just possible that verse ⁵ is part of Paul's speech, and that he reminded these twelve men of their baptism, which had been prospectively into the name of Jesus as their Lord. Against this, which is not the more probable view of the passage, is to be set the fact that we never hear of any one else being baptized into the name of Jesus till after the resurrection. The apparent contrast is between a baptism that signified only repentance and a baptism that signified also **allegiance to Jesus**. Apart from that, these men certainly were sadly deficient. They may have known something of the appearance of that person whom John foretold, of Jesus of Nazareth, His life and His death; they may have known—though Apollos apparently did not—that Jesus was the Messiah; they may even have known the promises uttered to the apostles, of the Holy Spirit

who should be sent, though perhaps they deny this; but they certainly declared they did not know the Holy Spirit had been sent, and that they did not receive the gift. The absence of this had evidently attracted the attention of the apostle. And the natural interpretation of Luke's words is that Paul first explained the difference, then administered Christian baptism, then invoked for them those gifts of the Spirit which baptism did not confer upon them.

19[9]. Here is another separated church. It is interesting to see that while the Jews were content with three services a week, Paul held seven at least. Compare 2[46].

19[39—41]. The Ecclesia here is the regular assembly of Ephesian freemen, entitled to certain rights of self-government, and distinct from other residents there or casual visitors. See note on 5[11].

20[6, 7, 11]. Apparently Paul was for himself observing the Jewish feast of unleavened bread, while the disciples at Troas took no notice of the Jewish sabbath, but met to break bread on the first day of the week. They seem to have observed a meal in common as well, but to have abandoned the daily observance customary at Jerusalem.

20[17, 28]. The church at Ephesus had evidently been organized on the familiar Jewish pattern, with a committee of elders. But Paul gave them a new name, Episcopoi, **Bishops**, Overseers. The word was in use among the Greeks for Inspectors, especially travelling inspectors sent out to report on the accounts and military condition of minor allies. It was used in the Greek Bibles for subordinate officers of all kinds, including Pharaoh's tax-collectors and Josiah's paymasters at the temple building; but, while usually relating to

money matters, it had not apparently lost a general sense, though it never expressed an officer with religious duties. In Paul's lips it does not yet seem an official title; and though he did touch on their duty of working with their own hands, giving to the poor, and being on guard against covetousness, yet he did not imply that their duties were limited to finance; rather, he counselled them here to warn their brethren against divisions and errors, and to attend to pastoral work.

It is clear that there was not one bishop standing out at Ephesus above the elders at large.

21[8–10]. Philip, formerly, and perhaps still one of the seven elders at Jerusalem, was now settled at Cæsarea, and had devoted himself to preaching so as to be known as the **Evangelist**. It is doubtful whether this word yet implied a regular office any more than the word Baptist had done when applied to John. There is no reason to think that an evangelist was an officer likely to be met in every well-organized church; and the case of prophets is nearly alike in this respect.

21[17, 18]. Again, we find that, at Jerusalem, while the brethren at large might perhaps be present on a public occasion, the business was left to James and the elders, in regular Jewish fashion.

21[20–26]. The elders discriminated excellently between those, on the one hand, who, being Jews by birth, did not abandon keeping **The Law** because they had found Him of whom Moses wrote in The Law, and those, on the other hand, who, never having been Jews, had found the desire of all nations, and had been declared exempt from The Law. They had made concessions to keep both parties in harmony, and now invited Paul to testify that whatever he felt and had written about

The Law being abrogated, he was personally willing to observe it. He agreed; but when presently he got into trouble thereby, he was not energetically supported by them. Yet by his concession he simply acted in the spirit of his Master's gentle transition from the old to the new. Similarly, his speech on the castle steps set forth his story so as to retain Jewish sympathy as long as possible.

22[16]. Ananias as a devout man according to The Law, when he wished to encourage Saul to arise and be **baptized**, could quote phrases familiar to every one versed in the scriptures: Wash away thy sins, a reminiscence of Ps 51[2], Isa 1[16], Jer 4[14]; Call upon His name, Gen 4[26], Ps 50[15], Isa 12[4], Jer 29[12]. Even Saul the persecutor, crimsoned with the blood of the martyrs, was not too stained but that he might arise and be baptized; though his sins were as scarlet, they should be as white as snow; he might wash and be clean, ceasing to do evil and learning to do well. Not for him the easy conscience of the eunuch who could ask, What doth hinder me to be baptized? Peter had needed to encourage the men of Jerusalem and say that their murder of Jesus did not debar them from having their sins blotted out, Acts 3[14—19]; and if this supreme sin had not come in Saul's way, yet the thought that he had been a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious made him own, long afterwards, that he was chief of sinners, and magnify the long-suffering of Christ in showing him mercy, I Tim 1[12—16]. So it was little wonder he needed some special assurance before he dare obey the command to be baptized.

There is a strange misunderstanding of Ananias as if he meant, Wash away thy sins by being baptized. Such an idea could not be present to a man who knew

from these psalmists and prophets that God declined material gifts and preferred obedience, Ps 50[7–15]; that God delighted not in sacrifice and burnt-offering, but desired a broken spirit and a contrite heart, Ps 51[1. 17]; that Isaiah was repudiating sacrifice, burnt-offering, oblations, incense, and all the paraphernalia of new moon and sabbath; that Jeremiah was contrasting physical circumcision with the renewal of the heart. If Paul had thus understood him, he would have referred to his baptism more often, especially at 26[18]; and he might have clinched his argument at Gal 1[17] by adding, "Neither did any apostle wash away my sin, only Ananias of Damascus, at the Lord's bidding." Ananias said exactly, "Arising, get thyself baptized; and get thy sins washed away, calling on His name." The most natural understanding is a double command relating to outward acts and a double command relating to inward dispositions. The former referred to the new rite enjoined by Christ, the latter to the unchanging conditions on which man obtains access to God. If baptism were a condition of washing away sins, salvation were harder than before Christ; rather, repentance for the remission of sins and invocation of God are the conditions on which alone baptism may be given.

22[25]. Though Paul objected to taking quarrels between Christians before heathen judges, he never hesitated to claim his full legal rights when he was accused.

23[27–35]. Lysias, like Gallio, recognized the innocence of Paul under purely **Roman law**, but, like Pilate in similar circumstances, was not sure whether Jewish law should not be administered in a case between Jews at Jerusalem. A Roman citizen, however, deserved a

trial at the Roman capital by a Roman judge, when the questions of jurisdiction and personal law could be ascertained. As it was, he had put himself in such a position that he was amenable at once, in the civil aspect, to The Law of the Jews, of the temple, and of Cæsar, 25[8].

THE EPISTLES

For systematic study it is wise to read the Epistles in the order wherein they were written. Hints are annexed as to the chief points that successively became prominent in the apostolic teaching about The Church.

The Sect of the Nazarenes

Acts 1—9
James

A Footing for Gentiles as Christians

Acts 10—18[11]
I and II Thessalonians
Acts 18[12]—19[9]

Religious Equality

I Corinthians	Christian liberty and worship
Acts 19[10]—20[1]	
II Corinthians	Christians independent of Jerusalem
Galatians	The Law obsolete as a rule of life
Romans	The Law and the Jews preparatory for the Gospel and The Church
Acts 20[3]—28	

The Imperial Destiny of the Church

Philemon	
Colossians	Christ the Head of The Church
Ephesians	The Church Christ's Body working in the world
Philippians	Christ supreme; Jews enemies of The Church

ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCHES

Titus, I Timothy, II Timothy

THE NEW PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST AND CHRISTIANS

Hebrews	The Ceremonial Law symbolic of Christ, and obsolete since His death
I Peter	The State imagining Christianity means lawlessness; The Church urged to loyalty

DANGERS TO THE CHURCH

Jude, II Peter	Teachers imagining that Christianity means lawlessness
Revelation	Persecution by Jews and the State

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON

I, II, III John	Mutual love the Christian rule of life

ROMANS

The epistle to the Romans was written from Corinth after the stormy events that led to the writing of the epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians. The Gospel had spread from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, chief town of the province, and Antioch, capital of the proconsulate. Paul had founded churches at Tarsus, capital of Cilicia; Salamis, capital of Cyprus; Antioch in Pisidia, capital of Galatia; Ephesus, capital of Asia; Thessalonica, capital of Macedonia; Corinth, capital of Achaia. The next stage in this direction was Illyricum, whose boundaries he had already reached; then lay Italy, with the capital of the empire, Rome.

There were many people occupied in spreading the gospel, even if they did not devote their whole lives to it. There was no deliberate effort made to plant churches in Lydda and Joppa, Phœnicia and Cyprus, Cyrene or Antioch; but every persecution would scatter the seed more widely. And every feast at Jerusalem brought pilgrims, not only from within the empire,—Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, and Crete,—but from Arabia to the south, or the great rival kingdom of Parthia, with its territories of Media, Elam, and Mesopotamia. In this way a few **sojourners from Rome** had had the earliest opportunity of hearing the gospel, and among the settlers constantly going up to the capital from the provinces,

little groups of Christians must have arrived at intervals. From 16^{3-17} we get the impression of an early stage such as this; little bands dotted about the city, with enough cohesion to make it possible to send one letter for all, but not with enough cohesion to be organized formally and take the title of a church, rather needing to be warned against divisions. Their existence was well known elsewhere, their fidelity famous, 1^{8}, and their conduct admirable, 16^{19}, while their hospitality might be counted upon, $16^{1,2}$. But they were not active in spreading the gospel, of which they seemed rather ashamed, $1^{15,16}$, so that years later the Jews in Rome could profess to know very little about it except that everywhere it was in bad odour, Acts 28^{22}. Many of them doubtless were as backward as the casual groups at Ephesus before Paul knitted them together. Therefore it was desirable they should be organized, better instructed as to the Christian ideal, and inflamed with zeal, 1^{11}, 15^{29}; and as hitherto no leading men had visited them, 15^{20}, Paul determined that his next visit should be paid there. This letter was to pave the way.

As the **little groups** had drifted into Rome they would not readily draw into one. One nucleus would be the converted Jews long resident there, with the proselytes who adopted the new teaching: Prisca and Aquila are specimens of such, a Roman lady and a Jew. These, if in a minority, had the instinct of close fellowship, which probably made them the most influential company. At any moment the irritant visitors from Jerusalem, who had wrought such trouble in Antioch and Galatia and Corinth, might visit Rome and try deliberately to keep the Nazarene Jews apart from the Gentile Christians; indeed, some trouble of

the sort seemed already stirring, 16^{17}. Therefore, without the violent polemic that was needed to win back wavering churches, it was advisable to state plainly what the gospel was, to show its exact relation to The Law, and to indicate the exact position of Jews in the new arrangements. The doctrinal part of this epistle accomplishes these three things, and may be thus paraphrased:

'Righteousness is the free gift of the righteous God to all who believe on Jesus Christ; all need it, the Gentile condemned by his conscience, the Jew by his Law. The custody of The Law was an honour, but an awful responsibility, too; it revealed a standard that no one ever attained. **Faith was ever the means of salvation.** Before a meritorious life, or knowledge of The Law or even circumcision, Abraham was saved by faith. David never appealed to The Law to vindicate him, but when he had broken it, rejoiced in obtaining God's forgiveness. Faith not only obtains forgiveness, but also the actual transformation of character, one by the virtue of Christ's death, the other by His new life. This is not incredible when we reflect on the double damage done by the sin of Adam; and it is indeed imaged in our baptism, pledging us to be dead to sin and alive to righteousness.

'The chief good of **The Law** was **to reveal** more effectually the **sinful character** and the need of forgiveness, but it was only an interlude. Not that the abolition of The Law removes the only safeguard against sin; sin is logically incompatible with death to sin. When wedded to The Law, we must obey it; when The Law is dead, we need mind it no more and may obey Christ. Indeed, The Law was never any safeguard against sin; it only revealed more plainly

our sinful desires without giving any help against them. To give this is the sole glory of Christ, who imparts life by the Spirit. Now we feel the pangs as sin dies and the new life comes to birth; but they may be borne with the help of the Spirit and the unfailing love of God.

'Those who treasured The Law are indeed in evil case while they cling to it. Yet all scripture warned them that **Jews had no claim on God**; again and again the impenitent were punished and only a few were spared and blessed, while the calling of the Gentiles was distinctly foretold. Even the aim at righteousness is not enough if the route is wrong; and most seek it by keeping The Law in their own strength, not obeying Christ in His. The Law was meant to convince of the need of a Saviour and Helper. To recognize his arrival in Jesus, to accept Him as Lord, and to proclaim Him on every side, are the new duties which, unhappily, most of the Jews neglect, as was foreseen. Remember, too, God's foresight, and credit it in this case. The ingathering of the Gentiles may rouse their emulation and hasten the climax of God's purpose of redemption.'

2^{13-29}. Before Paul could erect his new scheme of doctrine, he had to clear the ground. In the minds of Jews and of all who had been under the influence of the Synagogue, he had to encounter two objections: Salvation is by keeping **The Law**; the saved are banded into a community marked by **circumcision**. Against these he reproduced the arguments recently urged on the Galatians, leading off with a quotation from James, and closing this section with one from The Law itself, Jas 1^{22}, Deut 30^{6}.

3^{19}. This is a mere repetition of what God said from

the first, that The Law was the peculiar privilege of the one nation; and in the conference at Jerusalem it had been agreed that The Law was not binding on Gentiles.

3[31]. Jews would of course recognize that the logical outcome of this argument would be their own abandonment of The Law, once it had led them to Jesus. Paul, however, was conciliatory, and did not insist on this corollary. He did rather encounter the question: If you lay all the stress on faith, and none at all on The Law, do you not cast discredit on The Law, and imply that those things which it forbids may now be done, that those things which it enjoins may now be neglected? His reply was: No, whatever was of value in The Law is still found in force. **Faith** in Jesus **means obedience** to Him; and though His commands be not couched in the phrases of The Law, they set up an even higher standard. Moreover, faith in Jesus not only implies our adhesion to this loftier ideal, but it obtains power to fulfil it, and herein The Law has no point of comparison.

4[9–12]. There are many who declare that baptism now replaces circumcision, though scripture is silent on this point, and the apostles allowed a long debate to proceed as to the binding force of circumcision, which was absurd if circumcision was already replaced by baptism. Such people may, however, ponder the effect of Paul's argument here, coupled with their own substitution: '**How is faith reckoned for righteousness?** When a man is baptized, or not baptized? Not when baptized, but before: he receives the sign of baptism, a seal of the righteousness of that faith which he had before he was baptized.' That is not what Paul says here, or what he means, or what he is thinking about; but it is undoubtedly Pauline and true.

Returning to the actual statement, that circumcision followed the faith of Abraham, we see Paul was not dealing here with the case of Isaac, circumcised at the age of a week, nor will his remarks apply to that case. It was never said of Isaac that Isaac's faith was reckoned for righteousness. Even those who hold to the view that infant baptism is justified by infant circumcision can find nothing here about infant circumcision, but only about circumcision **on a profession of faith.**

It is to be regretted that this cardinal blunder has produced an unthinking transference of terms that mean something here, but become meaningless in the new connection. Circumcision was a seal, for it produced a permanent physical mark; it was a seal of the righteousness of that faith which Abraham already had evinced repeatedly. Baptism is not a seal, it leaves no token visible a day afterwards; infant baptism is given before the infant has an opportunity of evincing any faith.

As to the real analogue of circumcision, Paul was not in the least hazy or reticent. He repeated again a truth as old as Moses and Jeremiah, that it referred to a **spiritual purification** of the heart and soul, of which it was a rough physical representation. The outward sign apart from the inward reality was valueless, and he plainly added that the inward reality apart from that outward sign was invaluable, $2^{28, 29}$.

The points of likeness between baptism and the **circumcision** of Abraham are, that each was given as a sign of faith, prescribed by God and obeyed by the faithful; further, that each symbolizes purity. But to say that the one replaces the other is unwarrantably to stretch the limited likeness. Jesus was circumcised, yet He

was baptized. Paul was circumcised, yet he was ordered to accept Christian baptism. Timothy was a disciple, and presumably baptized, yet Paul circumcised him.

Some kind of continuity there is of Christianity and Judaism—the continuity of a coming event with the shadow it casts before. But not every detail is to be continued. Paul was busy explaining why much has been discontinued. He explained circumcision in these passages without a mention of baptism; he explained baptism presently without a mention of circumcision; when he did mention the two in a breath, it was to allude to the one point they have in common, that they represent regeneration, Col 2[11].

5[13, 20]. The Jewish Law is not the only **law given by God**, though it was the only one clothed with His direct authority. There was law of some sort known between Adam and Moses, for death proves sin or the violation of some law even if only written in the conscience. Some of that may have found its way into the codes of Hammurabi, Confucius, Solon, and Numa, though mingled with much of human authority only. But God's will does not depend for its force on being committed to writing or codified. It was known once, only in a few precepts directly given, and in many customs approved by the common conscience of men; it was known far more minutely by the Jews when their Law was imposed on them; it is known best now that Jesus has announced it as **Love**, which all are desired to show towards God and man.

6[1—11]. Hitherto only the negative side of salvation had been dealt with, the freeing from the burden of past sin; the positive now was viewed. It was introduced by refuting a plausible corollary of Paul's great

doctrine of free grace, that constant sinning will elicit constant pardon. He opened out now the reasons why a Christian may not sin, and his first point was that the believer is not only acquitted by Christ, but united with Christ. United with Him, we die to sin; united with Him, we rise to a new life of holiness; and these experiences are inseparable.

The apostle now illustrated this cardinal doctrine by a reference to the dramatic rite of baptism. There are in reality a pair of facts in Christ's history, a pair of experiences in the convert's life, a pair of states of mind whereby these experiences are realized; and these pairs are depicted by a pair of **symbolic acts** in baptism —submersion and emersion. No pair can be sundered in fact; only in thought, as negative and positive. Turning away in horror from sin, we turn in love to Jesus. He was put to death in the flesh, but became a life-giving Spirit. If Christ is in us, we die to sin, but also arise to righteousness. These three sets of twin facts are commemorated by the twin acts of disappearance below the surface of water and reappearance from beneath. It is possible to think of pardon for the past without thinking of help for the future; but is it possible to receive one in practice while habitually spurning the other? To repent of sin without positively turning to Christ is only to torture one's self by straining at an unbroken chain; to trust in a Christ who died and was not known to have risen again would be basing one's hopes on a foundation whose strength was unknown and whose weakness was apparently proved by universal experience; to die to sin without simultaneously arising to righteousness would be fitly depicted by plunging below the water to stay there permanently without emerging again.

Adding the further thought in 8[11], the doctrines may be thus tabulated:

Ground of our redemption	
Death of Christ	Resurrection of Christ
Means of appropriation	
Repentance	Faith
Present spiritual experience	
Death to sin	Life to righteousness
Dramatic illustration in baptism	
Submersion	Emersion
Form of Divine grace	
Pardon for past sin	Help in future temptation
Future bodily experience	
Death	Resurrection

Paul never elaborated a doctrine of baptism; he preferred to preach the gospel by word of mouth, and not emphasize an act that he usually delegated to others. But at least he gave materials for recognizing its symbolism.

Mr. Lambert agrees in his Kerr Lectures, page 173: "It is practically certain that in the apostolic age immersion was the ordinary form of baptism. And in the disappearance of the convert beneath the water and his emergence again to the light of day, Paul saw a striking symbol of the union with Christ in death and in life which faith accomplishes."

The symbolism of baptism, being thus expressive, is not lightly to be abandoned. No pouring or sprinkling offers any analogy to the death of our Lord, to His resurrection, to our death to sin, our new life to righteousness. A rite not only enjoined by our Lord, but twice compared by Him with His own death, Mark 10[38], Luke 12[50], and here compared again to that and His resurrection, is not to be replaced by another, even although the name is retained. It is a pity to

follow Pilate rather than our Lord in appreciating the adequacy of symbols, Matt 27[24], but it is natural for those who do not come into court with clean hands.

When, further, this new rite is performed on unconscious **babes**, who have no sins to repent of, no choice of a new life to make, then little remains of the original. How can Mr. Lambert say on page 220: "We are not justified in saying that faith is of the very essence of the ordinance itself," in view of the above quotation, which continues: "And yet the very use [Paul] makes of the symbolism of the rite indicates his sense of the real relation between baptism and faith; for the point on which most stress is laid, as it is the point most naturally suggested by the act of immersion, is that baptism is a being buried with Christ. But a burial is not a death; it is only a public certification and sealing of death. And, in like manner, baptism is not a dying with Christ, but rather a sealing of that death in Him and with Him which is immediately brought about by faith"? The fact is, as the Rev. J. E. Roberts, of Manchester, has well shown, that the arguments against **sacramentarianism** undermine infant baptism, and that when Protestant Pædo-Baptists think of the real meaning of the rite without being concerned to defend their own practice, they inevitably take the Baptist position. As it is, they can trace no resemblance between this situation and infant "baptism," and dare not prescribe this passage as a fit lesson at their ceremony.

7[1—6]. The figure of marriage supplied two illustrations here, with **The Law** as husband, the Jew as wife. The Law was first regarded as the stern Roman paterfamilias with absolute dominion over his wife: so long as the Jew lives, he is in the power of The Law. But if he

choose to abandon his privileged status, to reverse the proselyte conversion and die as a Jew, then being discharged from The Law, that very death to the old life is a rising to a new life wherein he is united to Jesus. Such is the main argument, re-stating 6[1—11] with special reference to The Law. But the relations may be viewed more naturally thus: the dominion of husband over wife is destroyed by his death as much as by hers, and she is then free to wed again. A Jew is under The Law as long as that has any vitality; but as a matter of fact the Law itself is dead, Jesus nailed it to the cross and triumphed, and the Jew is therefore free to unite himself to Jesus. Such is the passing illustration in verses [2, 3], like to the thought in Col 2[14]. Either way, whether the men that knew The Law died to it, or it is dead, the union is annulled, and the Christian has no further concern with The Jewish Law.

7[7—25]. The true merit of **The Law** was that it set up a lofty standard, and so helped men to find out sooner the innate revulsion of the heart from any obedience at all. Paul's training among the Pharisees had led him to complete obedience in deed and word; but the tenth commandment, which deals with thoughts, pierced the armour of his complacency, and **revealed him** to himself as **hostile** at heart towards God. Such an experience convinced him of the value of the weapon that could do this, and he extolled it as a probe to reveal the disease; but it was not a Good Samaritan to tend and heal the broken-down sinner. It made known to him his need of a Saviour, and so prepared him for Christ.

8[1—4]. However holy and righteous and good it was, it was limited in its scope; he could delight in it after the inward man, and serve it with the mind, for it

certainly made known a lofty ideal. But since in practice he did what The Law had taught him to hate, it was a Law **revealing and not defeating** sin, a Law entailing and not averting death. Though it was perfect to its end, that end was not far enough. Therefore The Law must be pronounced, in a sense, weak. The infusion of the Holy Spirit, however, supplied what was lacking, and enabled man to please God, and, in obeying Him fully, to more than fulfil the requirement of The Law.

9^{4-8}, 10^{3-10}. 'It was indeed great glory to have been singled out to be **God's special people**; to have had special relations with God in covenant; to have had the only revelation of God's will direct to the senses; to have enjoyed a symbolical service, foreshadowing not only the need, but the means of forgiveness; to have had many promises of a Deliverer and Saviour, who has actually sprung from their race. But, mere racial descent being unimportant, it was a vast mistake to rest in these privileges, and not **go on to fulfil** the duties of God's own people; to accept the New Covenant which superseded the old, to listen to the new law of love that transcended the old; to trust in the atonement made now in reality; to yield to Jesus, who was in every sense the end of The Law; to trust Him as Saviour with all the heart, and publicly to vow allegiance to Him as Lord.'

10^{11-15}. In the new body of subjects all previous distinctions of race and creed were unimportant; allegiance to Jesus was the one bond, and a primary **duty to the outer world** was to announce the freedom and universality of the salvation offered.

$11^{16-18, 23, 24}$. 'Jesus Christ is the Firstfruits, I Cor $15^{20, 23}$, and so in Him the whole race is representatively

offered to God, Ex 13[2]. If all the dough and all the olive-crop are dedicated to God by actually presenting Him with a part, Neh 10[35—37], so is the mass of mankind consecrated to God in Jesus. Indeed, He is more than Firstfruit, He is the original Root; in His image man was made and blessed, and He affects the whole of His descendants, so that they can still be pronounced "very good," Gen 1[27—31].

'The thought was familiar with the prophets. Jeremiah declared that **the kingdom of God** was like "a green olive-tree, fair with goodly fruit," 11[16]. Its roots are out of sight, below the level of earthly time, Eph 1[4]. Jesus is the eternal Root, Isa 11[10], Rev 5[5], planted by the great Husbandman, God, John 15[4]. From Him has sprung a tree of believers, in whose trunk are such as Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah. The Husbandman began a special culture of one stem with Abraham and the fathers, 9[5], 11[28]. Remember, on the one hand, that not all Abraham's offspring were truly of this tree; it was always being pruned, Isa 10[33], Rom 9[27]. Remember, on the other hand, that the promise was sure not only to those on the stem of The Law, but to those on any branch from the trunk of the faith of Abraham, Gen 12[3], Rom 4[16]. Outside Judaism there always were true believers, such as Naaman and Job, not even like Caleb, Rahab, and Ruth, grafted into the Jewish stem. Yet, undoubtedly, Jews, by their numbers and culture, thus became the nucleus of the kingdom, and grew to be the principal stem. Unhappily it proved fruitless, as our Lord feared, Luke 13[9], 20[9—16]; so "the branches of it are broken" off, Jer 11[16]. They did not abide in Christ, so were cast forth as branches, and withered, John 15[6]. But though some prophets knew the stem

deserved only to be destroyed root and branch, Mal 4^{1}, Matt 3^{10}; though the great Husbandman certainly "lopped the boughs with terror," yet a few branches survive, even out of the stock of Jesse, to bear fruit, Isa 11^{1}, Rom 11^{1-5}. The branches lopped off were only fit for burning; they could not be grafted on to you wild olives of Gentiles, Ezek $17^{4, 22, 23}$, as would have been natural, so as to make you fruitful also, Isa 42^{6}, 49^{6}, 60^{1-3}; Acts 13^{47}; Rom 2^{19}. So He reversed the process, and grafted you on to the trunk. Now you Gentiles, equally with the remnant of Jews, are rooted in Christ, Col 2^{7}.

'But do not be over proud; you did not bear the Christ according to the flesh, and the Jews did, Rom 9^{5}. He is not only the Root, but also the Offspring of David, Rev 22^{16}. The Jews are the old lump, out of which He is taken as Firstfruits—the little leaven to leaven the new lump of you Gentiles, Gal 5^{9}, till all the Kingdom is leavened, Matt 13^{33}. They are doubly related to Christ; you singly. Your salvation comes by a Jewish Saviour through Jewish missionaries. Faith is certainly the supreme thing, whether in Jew or Gentile; but even ties of race are not to be quite neglected. As soon as the Jews evince faith, it will be easier to bring them into the Kingdom than to bring you, and they will be far more fruitful.'

In a general way Paul aligns himself with the old prophets; with John the Baptist, Matt $3^{9, 10}$; with his Lord, Matt 7^{19-21}; with Peter, Acts 3^{23}; insisting on the uselessness of mere natural descent from Abraham and the importance of faith—a position assumed also by John, 1^{11-13}. But while still laying the main stress on the life-giving power of faith, he at last explained what advantage the Jew hath more than in being entrusted

with the oracles of God, 3[1—3]. When the Jew believes, he is likely to be the finest agent for Christ, as he is the most natural one, Acts 3[25, 26], 13[46]. Such men as Neander and Edersheim illustrate his doctrine.

Like other great principles, this may be applied in directions that Paul was not contemplating at the time. If we consider **Christian parents** as the main stem, **and their children** as the branches, his argument will run: 'Faith is all-important; without that, even children of godly parents cannot remain in external communion with the people of God, but must be cut off, however hard it seem; while even the children of heathen must be welcomed in when they believe, however unnatural it seem. But when the unbelieving child of believing parents turns and believes for himself, how natural to welcome him in! what great results may we not expect from his service!'

Meanwhile, we may not take what is secondary, and use it to override what is primary. Christian parentage alone, without personal Christian faith, is of no more value than Jewish parentage alone without personal faith; and even Ezekiel knew that was worthless, 18[4, 10—13, 20]. It may justify hopes that faith will appear sooner, but it first becomes of actual value when that faith appears; then the working by love is more energetic. Even then it is accessory; faith is the principal thing. And **baptism** follows faith.

12[1]. The new body was a **priesthood**: its ritual was not material, but spiritual; its sacrifices not of dead victims, but of living persons, to be dedicated once for all to God's service. In such a priesthood Paul shared, offering service at his prayers, 1[9]; compare 15[16].

12[3—13]. These suggestions of the **mutual duties** of Christians arose naturally out of the state of things

at Corinth, whence Paul wrote. For comments see I Cor 12.

13¹—⁷. This does not discuss directly the relation of an organized church with an organized State; but the teaching sheds some light on it. Paul fully endorsed his Lord's words to Pilate; the **authority of rulers** is real, for they are God's representatives on earth. Our practical difficulties usually arise from conflicting claims made in the name of church, of State, of family. Yet in political life we often meet similar conflicts when a mayor and a governor and a president or governor-general are charged with administering different laws all binding on the citizen. The State provides a Supreme Court that will lay down a final decision as to where obedience is due. The Christian can humbly ask Divine guidance in studying his Bible and counselling with his fellow-Christians, but his own conscience must be his Supreme Court. The help given here is that the civil authority is supreme within its constitutional limits, namely, punishing evil and rewarding good; the citizen must pay due deference to the officers, and support them by taxes, so long as they are ministers of God's service.

13⁸—¹⁰. Here is another careful statement that in disregarding the old Law with its ten commandments Paul did **not sanction lawlessness.** It is the charge ever being levelled against Paul at the time, and against those who reproduce his teaching still. All that was of permanent value in that Law is comprised in one sentence of it, repeated with richer meaning by the one Lawgiver: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

14¹—¹². The discussions in this chapter probably reflect some difficulties at Corinth which at an earlier

stage were dealt with in I Cor 10[23—31]. At a much earlier stage the conference at Jerusalem had laid down a compromise on matters of diet, but without explaining the principles underlying. Paul was not content to dwell upon precedent, but preferred to state a reason. He is here precise in stating, first, that all **duty is ultimately to God**; that every man is accountable direct to Him. If God has delegated authority in any department to a magistrate, that must be respected; if to a church, that must be respected. If a magistrate oversteps his authority and contradicts God, the answer is to be given, "We must obey God rather than man." Even a church has no right to usurp authority not committed to it, and to forge a new yoke to lay on the necks of the disciples. The **terms of communion** are explicit—Repentance and Faith. To add to these is certain to exclude some from human fellowship whom the Lord includes in His own fellowship. To take up time discussing personal details such as food is to distract from Christian activity and to endanger Christian love.

As for the two parties, he has advice for each: 'Why dost thou set at nought thy brother? To use God's gifts for sustaining God's creature is good in itself, if done with gratitude; but if thy use of a particular gift pains thy brother, why despise his trouble?' And for the censorious one he puts the equally forcible question: 'Why dost thou judge thy brother? If a scruple of thine debars a Christian brother from what pleases him, love to him compels thee to examine whether thy objection is warranted by Christ or needs to be surrendered.' So Christ's **law of love** can solve awkward questions of conduct.

14[5, 6]. One other application of this principle was

made. Either at Corinth or at Rome the question had arisen as to any **distinction between days.** Jews were accustomed to observe one day each week as a day of special rest and worship, with several fasts and feasts, some ordained in The Law, some as national anniversaries. Gentiles, of course, had no interest in these, and possibly had their own civic anniversaries. Christians of all shades might think of a new series of days, either personal or local or universal, such as the first day of the week as that on which the Lord arose, the fourth that on which He was betrayed, the sixth that on which He was crucified, the anniversaries of His baptism and death and ascension, of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Others might prefer to live at such high pressure that there was no room for any distinction, because every day was crowded with Christian work.

Paul saw no need for uniformity, provided only that each man adopted his course in honour to God. If, however, any man justified himself on other grounds, such as obedience to the Jewish Law, that was another variety of the error he fought so vigorously, and such a case he condemned in Gal 4^{10} and Col 2^{16}. And, of course, if a man esteems every day alike, not as a gift from God to be used to His glory, but as time to kill in pleasure, he may not wrest Paul's words to excuse his ingratitude and idleness; whether or not he scandalize a church, he will have to give account of himself to God.

14^{13-23}. In giving account, three tests can be applied. Is any **command of God** disobeyed? On the food question Paul went behind the concordat of Jerusalem, and applied his basic principle that the Jewish Law was obsolete; distinctions of clean and unclean were out of date. One command of God is paramount, **Love thy**

neighbour as thyself: to annoy him by flouting his scruples, however absurd, was to break this command. If **conscience** could not approve fully, the light that was given even to ancient Gentiles was disregarded, and no account that would pass muster could be given to God.

Thus The Law was tacitly but effectually set aside as irrelevant, and the permanent touchstones of conduct were given, Love and Conscience.

15[16]. Another metaphor taken from the **priestly** ritual of the temple. The Gentiles are to be brought as an offering to God (compare Isa 66[20]), and when sanctified by the Spirit will form a sacrifice fit to be offered by their missionary as priest.

15[26]. Compare I Cor 16[1, 19].

I CORINTHIANS

The epistles of Paul to the Corinthians are only part of a long correspondence, of which their letters have perished except for several quotations by him, and of which at least his first letter has perished also. Their reply included several petty questions on sexual matters, on the extent of Christian liberty, on the relative importance of miraculous gifts. The tone of the letter betrayed a disposition to doubt his authority, so that he prefaced his reply with an explanation of the duties of the Christian ministry generally and the apostolate in particular. He also discussed and condemned their general restiveness and independency, dwelling on the value of tradition and the mutual obligations of churches. He blamed them for their factious spirit among themselves, regulated their mode of worship, and corrected them on an important doctrine.

But men from Jerusalem, like those who had caused trouble at Antioch and in Galatia, were already in Corinth, and one of their leaders scoffed at Paul and his authority, claiming that he himself was direct from the mother-church, with credentials from the original Twelve, and depreciating by attack and insinuation the mere evangelist from Antioch. This seems to have called forth a severe letter referred to later in II Cor 2^{4}, $7^{8, 12}$. The visit from Timothy accomplished little; one from Paul led only to insult and defiance, and he went to Macedonia, despatching Titus to report

to him at Troas. On receiving news of a better spirit in the church, he sent an appeal for peace and love, embodying a credential to Titus and others to complete the collection for the poor at Jerusalem as a token of the unity of all parties in all the churches.

These letters, then, have no systematic exposition of doctrines such as he wrote to the Romans; but they show the actual working of a church, its internal life, its relations to visiting teachers, and the solution of many trivial questions by referring them to some great principles of permanent value.

I Corinthians 1^{10-12}. The church at Corinth had not absolutely split into two or three separate groups, meeting, worshipping, and working independently, but was seamed by one set of lines based on attachment to different teachers, and another based on social strata, 11^{18-21}. Even these Paul objected to, for outward unity is imperilled, and its advantage is doubtful if there is real disunion.

We must remember that such names as Lutheran, Calvinist, Brownist, Muggletonian, Wesleyan, Swedenborgian, Campbellite are nicknames given by outsiders often in contempt; it is hard to label men so, and then blame them if to some extent they acquiesce. Such cases present only an apparent disregard of Paul's counsel not to call one's self after a man; the real disregard is when a party exists refusing to hold fellowship with others, and claiming as its peculiar title such universal titles as The Church, Brethren, Christians, Disciples, Catholics. And a community is doubly at fault when, despite its assumption of unity, it is really a congeries of parties with widely different principles and revering different teachers.

1$^{14-17}$. If baptism were comparable in importance to **preaching**, Paul could not have written thus. The common sense of men agrees that to persuade and gain the adhesion of a man is more difficult and more important than formally to admit him; a traveller soliciting orders receives a higher salary than the clerk who takes the money. If baptism actually effected any spiritual change, Paul could not have written thus. It is full of symbolism, is a valuable clinch of a man's decision, and may even impress the spectators as a dramatic preaching, yet is so deficient in this respect as compared with the spoken word, which may vary to suit different moods, that Paul rejoiced his commission was to preach, not to baptize. It needed a Jesus to expound Isaiah, but only a sexton to put the roll away.

To ordain ministers with a special mention of their authority to baptize and to administer the Lord's supper is natural for a community that in defining a church specifies that the sacraments are duly administered, but has no word to say about its duty to the outside world. Such a community has lost Paul's sense of proportion.

2. The secular ideal of **education** is one thing, the Christian another. Athenian philosophers could not listen without laughter to a story of a man raised from the dead, nor could it be taken seriously by Festus, the intelligent Roman; but Timothy, nurtured on the Bible, or even Agrippa, who knew the prophets, might be won to accept Christ. The aim of all education should be to reveal the glory of God and fit the learners to reveal it further.

A man with a splendid literary and scientific education is not thereby competent to appreciate spiritual facts. If he **studies the Bible** with that equipment alone,

he may do great service in elucidating some obscure points, appreciating its literary excellence, showing the order of its books in time, the circumstances under which they were written, the possible authors of the anonymous books. It is quite likely that very much debate will be needed before agreement is reached on these points, and that many wrong opinions will be ventilated, though in the end such study will be helpful to the Christian. But such study is beside the real mark, unless pursued only as a means to higher ends. If pursued for its own sake, it is like the conduct of the Australian blackfellow, who sees in the telegraph wire only good raw material for his weapons.

The Bible can only be fully appreciated when studied with the **help of that Spirit** who comes from God for spiritual ends. And he who has gleaned a few spiritual facts from it, and applied them to his conduct, has a better education for that life which is life indeed than he who has graduated highest at the finest of secular universities, but has only the wisdom of men. There need be no sundering. A man who was born in the university town of Tarsus, had taken his theological course at the feet of Gamaliel, had been face to face with Jesus, and had spent three quiet years thinking out what it all meant, was not the man to decry education, provided it be under God and devoted to His service.

3, 4. These chapters throw some light on the mutual relations of **Christian ministers.** Paul claimed such honour as was due to the founder of a church, but otherwise ranked himself with Apollos and Peter, whose gifts might differ, but who are not declared to be inferior in standing. Although he did use authority over Timothy, and afterwards over Titus and others,

yet the principle laid down that all were God's fellow-workers suggests that they were as yet apprentices learning under wise masters, but not of a permanently inferior grade. Indeed, there is no thought here of official rank, except in the case of apostles who could not survive in future times. Their case apart, all ministers are alike entrusted with God's counsels, to proclaim, to organize, to tend, to prune, and to be tested at last by permanence of results. One is not to be pitted against another because his gifts make him excel in one direction; the only valid criticism is not by the church nor by the man himself, but by God.

3^{9-17}. This comparison of a **church** to a building was obvious after our Lord's own words, but Paul gave it a different turn. Christ was the foundation ready laid; he, the master builder, had laid bare that foundation in Corinth by proclaiming Jesus as the Saviour, and he had laid the foundation course in the persons of Stephanas and his household, the firstfruits of Achaia, with Titus, Justus, and Crispus and Gaius. Other preachers were adding more living stones to the structure rising into a little temple wherein the Spirit might dwell. But unhappily some were also adding wood, hay, and stubble, and in the day of testing these worthless members of the Corinthian church would perish.

Such was Paul's expansion and modification of our Lord's figure: 'We ministers are God's fellow-workers; you Corinthians are God's building, a temple of God.' It was afterwards repeated on a universal scale instead of a local, Eph 2^{20-22}; and it was adopted in I Pet 2^{5}. It is very usual to make two further applications, one based on our Lord's own phrase, the other narrowed from it. If Jesus builds His Church on an acknowledgement

of Himself as Son of God, then the material for building must be of the same kind—doctrines, not men; the edifice will be a body of doctrine; and the day of testing will destroy false doctrine. If a man bases himself on this fundamental truth, he can erect on that a superstructure of thought and inference, of work and service, all to be valued in the time of judgement. These interpretations are not self-consistent, and are plainly different from Paul's meaning as stated in [9, 12, 17].

4[17]. Corinth shared the Athenian habit of wanting to hear and practise some new thing. Paul, when staying there, had written to praise another church for its respect of the **traditions** he had delivered, II Th 2[15], 3[6]. The apostles generally were empowered to develope the teaching of Jesus and to organize the churches. Under this authority he had delivered certain directions as to customary usage, doctrines, matters of fact. Of these the Corinthians were somewhat heedless, though they had apparently boasted that they were attentive to them—a statement that Paul could by no means endorse, 11[2—16]. He was sending Timothy to recall them to his instructions, reminding them of the general practice in other churches, 7[17], 16[1], and bidding them respect the customs of other churches, 10[32], 11[16, 22], 14[33—36], and intending to introduce greater uniformity when he arrived, 11[34].

This language is superficially inconsistent with our Lord's rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees for hiding The Law under their traditions. But the cases are radically different. The Law purported to be a complete whole, and adding to it was expressly forbidden, Deut 4[2], 12[32]. Jesus, on the other hand, did not give any detailed body of doctrine or any expanded

code of law, and He expressly authorized the apostles to announce the facts relevant to salvation, to teach with authority what He had taught them and what the Spirit should teach them, and to guide the infant church generally. Paul had compared his teaching with that of the earlier apostles, and they were agreed. His "traditions" were then such facts as were presently recorded by the evangelists, or as were recapitulated, 15[3–8]; such doctrines as were taken down from his lips, and are read by us in his epistles; such customs as he mentioned, 11[23–26]. The traditions of the apostles were mostly committed to writing in their lifetime, and are now printed in the **New Testament.** A few other customs of the churches can be traced so early and so universally that we may be morally sure they were countenanced or instituted by the apostles, though they are not expressly ordered in words recorded in the New Testament: for instance, the participation of women in the Lord's supper, the leadership of each church by a committee with one president, a special meeting for worship on the first day of the week. But traditions which are not soon written, or not vouched for by observance in widely different quarters, have no guarantee of genuineness, and experience shows they are sure to become altered. Many traditions are current which are demonstrably false; and of some of these, such as infant baptism, it is sadly true that they make the word of God of none effect.

The Corinthians, however, were in practice **independent** of tradition, of the apostle's orders, of the customs at other places. Inasmuch as Paul smartly and repeatedly rebuked them for striking out novel paths, even in such slight matters as the attire of women at worship, we may with reason object to the vast

transformation of worship in "Catholic" circles; then humbly ask whether an "Independent" system of church life would meet with his approval to-day.

5. An apostle was empowered to pronounce and execute sentence on an offender, as in the cases of Sapphira, Simon, and Elymas. But it was important to accustom the **churches to exercise discipline** and keep themselves pure, for the apostles must soon pass away, while the churches might abide for centuries. The good effects of this mutual care are alluded to in II 7^{11}.

5^{6-8}. This exhibition of spiritual analogies to the literal customs ordained in The Law pointed to its permanent value even when no longer useful as a guide of life.

5^{12}. When it is fully grasped that a church is a select body, and cannot till some final triumph include all in a neighbourhood; that a church has to regulate internal matters, and is so far from being called upon to regulate external that secular business may be transacted between Christians and flagrant sinners—then we may have fewer attempts to impose on a town or a country **Christian customs by State legislation** but for Christian reasons. It is doubtless desirable to discourage fornication, and many States do so by declaring it illegal if pursued publicly or for gain. It is desirable to discourage extortion, but modern States will seldom break a bargain, however extortionate, if the debtor knew what he promised. It is desirable to discourage covetousness, but scarcely any State has legislated against it. It is desirable to discourage idolatry, but the State protects it in India. The function of the State is to prevent evil and praise good by outward compulsion; one function of the

churches is to do the same by moral education in the mind of Christ. The one deals only with acts and words, the other seeks to influence these by bringing the heart into willing obedience to Christ. Churches should rather educate the public conscience than seek to declare things crimes which, though they are sins before God and vicious in themselves, are not recognized generally as harmful to the community; for men compelled against their will are of the same opinion still, and will hate the churches that seem tyrannical.

6¹⁻⁷. Paul did but repeat and expand what his Lord had said. The **local church** might have to **settle** between two brethren which of them had sinned; but if the verdict was not accepted, the sinner was to be expelled the church. To submit to an outsider a difference between two brethren was to belie the title of brother.

6¹¹. 'You asked for baptism as a pledge that your heart was changed; you were in public formally consecrated to God's service; in the name of Christ it was authoritatively announced that your sins were forgiven and that you were taken possession of by God's Spirit. Will you belie yourselves, stultify the church, and grieve the Spirit by relapsing into sin?' This is the germ of the argument in Rom 6¹⁻¹⁴.

"Ye were sanctified," rather, **consecrated**. The word bears here no ethical meaning, but is used in the familiar Old Testament sense of Separated to God's service, see Deut 15¹⁹, Jer 1⁵, Ecclus 45⁴, 49⁷. This sense is retained in the New Testament by every writer except Paul, who sometimes enriched it with a deep moral sense. Thus gold and gifts are said to be consecrated, Matt 23¹⁷·¹⁹; food, I Tim 4⁵; utensils generally, II Tim 2²¹; also living men, such as Christ, John 10³⁶, I Pet

3[15]; the apostles, John 17[17, 19]; and Christians generally, as often in Hebrews.

It is not said that baptism was the formal means of consecration and of the declaration of forgiveness, but doubtless this is true. What is not said and cannot be true is that baptism produces a moral change, "sanctification," and is the condition of forgiveness, "justification."

6[12]. Comparing 8, 10[23–33], it would appear that some unruly Corinthian had declared, **All things are lawful** for me. Paul limited this: All things may perhaps be lawful, but not all things are wise, nor will I enslave myself to any, nor do all things help the spiritual life. He refrained from a direct denial, possibly because the words were a direct quotation from himself in another connection. He may have said, as he afterwards wrote, You are not under Law, but under grace; and this incident may have led to the careful guarding of his language in 9[20, 21]. In a sense he agreed with the Corinthian: the Jewish Law never bound a Gentile; so far as it was concerned, all things were lawful for him. But the Corinthian forgot conscience, love to God, love to man, expediency, utility.

7[14]. The unbelieving husband **has been consecrated** in the wife; see note on 6[11]. If an inanimate altar can by mere contact consecrate the gold laid on it, does not a pious wife bring her husband into special relation with God? Marriage was not a mere arrangement for fleshly ends: in itself it bound together the spouses not by mere carnal ties, but by spiritual, just as on the other hand fornication—that hideous parody of marriage—could degrade the fornicator. It was not, as the rabbis said, dissolved by the conversion of one partner. To remain wedded to a heathen was not, as

the Corinthians feared, a defiling of the temple of the Holy Spirit; rather, the spiritual life of the new Christian would react on husband and children. The society of a Christian is a means of grace: a husband may be won by the behaviour of his wife, or a wife by her husband, or a child by a parent. Indeed, said Malachi, 'For this end was marriage instituted. Saints in heaven, and angels, are not married; it was open to God to arrange similarly on earth. He was not straitened by lack of the Spirit of life, yet He fashioned woman and gave her to man that they might beget children and train them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' If qualities are transmitted from generation to generation, if a little leaven leavens the whole mass, shall **heredity and environment** tell for nothing when godly parents found a Christian home? Was it only of old that when God loved the fathers, He chose their children after them? Does not experience attest that the children of Christians yield themselves to Christ sooner and oftener than others? It may be that they experience no thrill of conversion such as prostrated Paul, that some day they awake with surprise to see that all men are not as they have been ever since they remember—lovers of God; but how and when the breath of the Spirit came is of less importance than that He has come to them, finding the way prepared by the sweet home influences.

How may this doctrine be suitably recognized? Christian parents may be reminded of their privilege in being entrusted with the care of children to lead to Christ; at marriage and at thanksgiving for childbirth special attention may be drawn to the matter. But these are domestic, not church, matters. An American who marries an English bride alters her

nationality at once; she is set apart from her kindred in him. Presently the parents may be congratulated on the birth of a son who may become President; but to inaugurate the baby as President is premature—it is enough to adjure them to give the best of training and fit him to be President. His birth into that household has given him an advantage above others; let them improve that, but not anticipate a call to be given by others and accepted by himself. When the child of Christian parents is conscious that the prayers of father and mother have been heard and that the Spirit of life has taken possession of him, then is the time to acknowledge that a probability has been realized, and both family and church may rejoice as the young disciple seeks baptism.

That Paul would have opposed infant baptism is clear by the other two cases mentioned. An unbelieving husband is consecrated in the wife, but is not baptized on the strength of her belief; an unbelieving wife is consecrated in her husband, but is not baptized on the strength of his belief; an infant who cannot yet believe is consecrated in her believing parents, but why should she be baptized on the strength of her parents' belief?

$7^{18, 19}$. If Paul had believed that circumcision was replaced by **baptism**, his words here would have been different. The only bearing his words here have on the subject may be exhibited thus: 'No ceremony is important in itself, only as a means to an end. Baptism in itself is nothing, lack of baptism in itself is nothing, but neglect of the command of God that believers should be baptized is a great deal.' To him who knows what is bidden and does it not, to him it is sin. Neglect may take the form of wilful defiance, or

wilful inattention to the subject, or careless procrastination in studying it to find out what is bidden. To call ignorance or non-compliance because of illness or other physical hindrance, "neglect," is harsh; baptism in itself is nothing. When any commandment of God for the baptism of infants is produced, it will be time to consider how blameworthy are parents who do not bring their infants for baptism.

8. Compare 6[12], 10[23–33], and Rom 14.

9[1, 2]. The call of a minister is evidenced by his converts.

9[20, 21]. Two asides here exhibit how ingrained and fundamental was Paul's doctrine of obedience. He was not under The Law, though he might voluntarily observe it in order to win Jews; he was not therefore without any law, for Christ's will was law to him.

10[1–5]. 'All began well, all had tokens of God's care, most lapsed; all had their sacraments, most proved rebellious.' A warning against indolence, a warning against **sacramentarianism.**

The crossing of the Red Sea was like **baptism**, in that it was a voluntary proof given by the people of their trust in a new leader, a turning the back on an old life of bondage and entering on a new life of freedom. These points of resemblance go to the root of the matter. There was indeed no repentance, no death of Moses that obtained their freedom; but no illustration can be expected to correspond at every point. In the form of the act there is little, if any, resemblance; there was no doubt a cloud overhead and a wall of water on either side, and it was God who cleft the sea and brought the cloud over them and bade them pass through. But it is not certain that Paul saw any resemblance there to the water beneath which the

candidate plunges and from which he emerges, and to the administrator who superintends.

It is, however, a baseless assumption to say that rain was poured on them from the cloud, or that spray was sprinkled on them from the sea; and therefore no deduction from such imaginary facts need be refuted. It is forgetful to say that the only people immersed then were the Egyptians. When did they emerge alive? Baptism implied submersion and emersion, too.

The safe points of comparison, which alone illustrate Paul's teaching here, are that the people broke with the life of Egypt, trusted Moses, and went on to a life of liberty; yet, he goes on to say, they soon hankered after Egypt, murmured at Moses, and grew tired of the new life. So the vows taken at baptism are not self-executing; there must be constancy and perseverance.

The second illustration is from the manna and the cliff-water. Not even the constant care of God checked their grumbling. His very gifts were taken as a due or as paltry and unworthy; so far from being means of grace, they were perverted into cause of offence. And so at Corinth the very **communion** service was not treated as a helpful reminder of the source of all spiritual life, but became the occasion of great scandals.

Observe again that the resemblance is in meaning, not in form. Manna is not exactly bread, and water is decidedly not wine. This may confirm us in forbearing to insist on any correspondence in form in the previous allusion.

It should be observed that this is the only passage that connects baptism and the Lord's supper. Even if we add Mark 10[38], they are associated simply as illustrations. When Paul discussed the origin and support of life, justification and sanctification, he was

silent about ceremonies, except that he once drew an illustration from baptism. The command to baptize is not recorded by two evangelists: except in this and the next chapter, no apostle ever mentioned or glanced at the Lord's supper. The inference is easy, that they are not vital to the Christian life; any system which places them in the forefront has neglected the proportions of the apostolic teaching.

10[16, 17]. There has long been a dispute as to the sense of the word Is at 11[24, 25], and the general Protestant opinion is that it is used for **Signifies, Represents.** Compare 3[11], [The foundation] is Jesus Christ; 10[4], The rock was Christ; 10[19], An idol is anything; Gal 3[16], Thy seed, which is Christ. A good example is II Th 2[4], where the literal A.V., Shewing himself that he is God, has been revised into, Setting himself forth as God. Taking the same sense here, we see that Paul meant: 'The cup of blessing which we bless, represents a sharing in the life of Christ. The loaf which we break represents a sharing in the Body of Christ, The Church. Seeing that there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one Body, for we all partake of the one loaf.'

The blood is the life; to drink the wine depicts our being nourished by the life of Christ. The loaf stands for the Body—not here the organism of flesh and bones that hung on the cross. Another thought is kept before us in verses [17, 32], and indeed is in view as far as 12[12—27], where the identification is explicitly made, as **The Church**, the Body of Christ, which all Christians together form, and of which each is a member. Breaking and eating the one loaf depicts our fellowship together in the one Church which is Christ's Body on earth.

The Lord's supper, then, is, amongst other things, a representation of the communion of Christians both with the risen Lord and with one another. It is on this understanding that Paul proceeded to show how incompatible was attendance at idolatrous banquets, which represented communion with demons.

It is impossible that Paul in a figurative chapter like the present meant: The cup literally is communion; the loaf literally is communion. Such statements are absolutely unintelligible, and even those who lean to a literal interpretation vary them to be: Our drinking from the cup is communion; our eating the loaf is communion. It is better to take the familiar ground that Is means Represents. Then we note that the rite does not effect communion; it only depicts what was previously and habitually existing.

The avoidance of the term Altar at 10[21] as compared with 9[13], 10[18], implies that Paul held no sacrificial view of the Lord's supper. The word We further implies that no exclusive right was reserved to an apostle or any officer of blessing and breaking. The varied order of these acts found here and in 11[23–25] shows that he was not particular about points of ritual so long as decency was maintained and intentional symbolism was not obscured.

10[24–31]. See comment on Rom 14.

11[17–22]. The **Lord's supper** was poorly understood by them. Not only did they forget that it pledged them afresh to fellowship with God, so that they tolerated idol worship alongside it; not only did they despise the customs of the other churches, enjoined by the apostles, but at the very service that ought to exhibit fellowship with Christ and His redeemed, they neglected His commands, and they

wounded their brethren by forming social cliques at His table.

Condemning their local practice, Paul reminded them afresh of the character and meaning of the original supper on the eve of the crucifixion, and of the Lord's intention that certain features of it should be repeated. The leading thought given by the Lord was, His death. Two subsidiary thoughts were that He encountered it freely for them, that it ratified a New Covenant between God and man. To these Paul now subjoined another, drawn also from our Lord's words then, that the supper was only to be observed during His real absence, and was a pledge that His presence should be restored to His disciples.

If then the Corinthians fastened on the social side of the meal, they not only destroyed that by their habit of making little groups of friends, each with a separate supply of food, but they ignored what was deeper and what alone gave promise of fellowship with God and man—the reminder of the sacrificial death which assured God's forgiveness and help.

Observe Paul's conception of **schism**, 11[18]. It was not a breaking up into utterly disconnected congregagations or bands of congregations. He was not confronted with the spectacle of three Anglican churches, four Baptist, two Congregational, one Disciple, etc., all in one town, each group placidly unconcerned with the doings of the others, or jealously watching them as if they were so many rival insurance companies, with perhaps one or two groups declining to admit the "legitimacy" of the others. He would have been horrified at such a state of things, but Schism was not his word for it. He saw one church, one so far as outward organization went, one in meeting, one in

worship; but with a horizontal severance into class strata of wealth, and a vertical severance into groups with personal attachments to leaders, on the verge of developing into doctrinal differences. Ashamed as he would be at the state of things in England and America and Australia, he would label as schismatic any congregation or federation of congregations where the accidents of caste and perspective of doctrine or anything else destroyed the desired brotherly feeling that ought to permeate the whole, and bind it into one family. To restore this real vital unity is his object for many pages of this epistle.

11[23]. Here is a **tradition** with only a single link. Paul received and handed on to the Corinthians. As we have this tradition put in writing by him within at most twenty-five years of his receiving it, there is no reason for doubting it, even if we had no promise that the Spirit should bring to remembrance whatever Jesus told His disciples. It is when traditions pass on orally for a century and more that we begin to hesitate, and reject when we find assertions that some things are handed down from the apostles which we can actually trace arising at a later period.

11[24]. We have lately been urged by sacerdotalists to translate here, This is My body, **sacrifice this**, etc. In favour of this rendering we are reminded that the Hebrew and Greek words for Do had an occasional meaning, Sacrifice, Ex 10[25], II Kings 17[32], Ps 66[15]. But Paul does not seem to understand our Lord in this sense; he could have objected forcibly to the Corinthians profaning a sacrifice, but he only blames their unworthy eating. Nor is there any other allusion to the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice, nor any suggestion of a sacrifice in the contexts. And although in a few

centuries the Greek church held sacrificial theories, the Greek preachers did not understand this passage as supporting them. Moreover, the translation cannot be carried through here: "This [loaf] is My body, sacrifice this; this cup is the New Covenant, sacrifice this." How can a cup or a covenant be sacrificed?

11[25]. "As often as ye drink." The brethren at first made **every meal a** memorial, Acts 2[46], 6[1, 2]; but the perturbing influence of the Greek club-dinners was too serious, as these chapters show, and the Corinthian scandals seem to have led Paul to change the custom to a weekly communion, Acts 20[6, 7]; I Cor 11[34]. The custom of grace before meat is perhaps a relic of the earliest usage.

11[26]. The two aspects of the ceremony prominent here are, Commemoration of the death of Christ, Anticipation of His return.

11[27–29]. Ignoring these associations of the ceremony, and treating it merely as a joint meal, a sort of club-dinner, was an insult not only to the poorer brethren, who were excluded from a share in the food of their richer associates, but also in their persons to the whole Church or **Body of Christ**, whose customs they wantonly departed from at the very moment when the loaf was reminding them of the unity of The Body; and also to **Christ the Head** of The Church, whose constant presence was forgotten, although it was promised at all times to two or three gathered in His name, and was brought vividly under their notice in the cup. So then, as this was an act of worship and fellowship, every man must remember the Lord's rule and postpone his worship till he had become reconciled to his brother, else he incurred further condemnation for hypocrisy as well as unkindness.

12—14. Being invited to decide which "gift of the Spirit" was most desirable, he pronounced for prophecy, because that can be used to build up and strengthen others. But he warned them that these gifts were evanescent, whereas the **grace of Love** was imperishable. As the miraculous gifts have been long extinct, we can modernize the argument, contrasting talents and grace.

The Spirit still betters the peculiar aptitudes of every man. Under His influence one may excel as a doctor, one as a scientist, one as a scholar, one as a translator, one as a preacher. Each may use his talent for the good of men and the glory of God, and the preacher has that talent which will be most useful. But if a man have all these talents at once, and yet his heart be cold, he is little benefited; while he who has learned the temper of Christ and follows His commandment, Love one another, goes in the most excellent way. Gifts are conferred on a few; but not only the talented and the officers can serve God and help their fellows, all who love may do this.

12^{13}. 'When you and I were baptized, we acknowledged the power of the one Spirit of God, not the separate decisions of our wills; we joined the **one Church** that our Lord said He would build, not merely the local congregations of Damascus or Corinth; we drank of the one living fountain of the Spirit promised by the Lord, who is not one at Samaria and another at Jerusalem and another at Corinth, John 4^{14}, 7^{37-39}; I Cor 3^{6}. There is one Spirit, one baptism, one Body.' Compare Eph 4^{4-6}.

12^{27-30}. The **mutual obligation** of members was emphasized without any special mention of officers. Every member useful to the whole in some way; helps

and governments not necessarily prominent. Apostles and prophets have since died out, teachers have taken over their preaching duties; but at best officers exist only to serve the churches, and all members alike are to do Christ's will on earth. Even in worship, all may take their turn in edifying the church and winning others to it, 14$^{23-33}$.

14^{37}. Full **apostolic authority** was here claimed by Paul for himself as much as for the original Twelve, and was regarded as being that of the Lord. Paul forbade even directly inspired prophets to contravene his authority, and implied that a good test of inspiration is recognition of his right to command. The result to-day is that when by honest historical criticism we are assured we have apostolic writings in our hands, we must on any point of Christian doctrine or practice simply ascertain with the help of the Spirit what their teaching is, and accept it as regulative. Any further developements may be wrong, and, if right, cannot be compulsory.

15$^{29-32}$. 'Else what will they gain who ask for baptism, impelled by **love to their dead Christian friends?** If the dead are not raised at all, and there is no future life in which all believers will be happy together, why then do men get themselves baptized at the request of their dying friends? They risk ostracism by the living, in hope of meeting again those whom they have loved and lost, just as we apostles risk even our lives daily in the same hope. What do I gain if the dead are not raised? In that case let us indeed "eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," as unbelievers have said and are saying!'

The language is extremely terse, and was so easily misunderstood that out of it arose a custom of being

baptized as proxies, instead of friends who had died unconverted. Such a superstitious ceremony, implying some gain to the dead by its bare performance, could never have been alluded to by Paul in mere neutral terms.

Two points in the paraphrase deserve attention. The sense of Gain for the vague verb Do in verse [29] is justified by Luke 19[18], and by the absolutely parallel thought in verse [32] here, What doth it profit me if the dead are not raised? It is extremely strange that this meaning has been generally, if not universally, overlooked. Then the preposition For is also very varied in its meaning. It very seldom means Instead of, yet the favourite interpretation here assumes this; whereas only of late has the more familiar sense been adopted, For the sake of, Impelled by. We read of men suffering, urged on by the love of Christ, Acts 5[41], 9[16], 15[26], 21[13]; labouring for the same motive, III John [7]; suffering out of love to man, Eph 3[1, 13], Col 1[24]; of Christ dying, moved by our sins, I Cor 15[3]; Heb 7[27], 9[7], 10[12].

The apostle knew well how family affection can lead one after another into the flock of Christ, I Cor 7[14]. Peter's wife had come with her husband, John Mark had followed his relatives, Timothy was the son of a Jewess who believed, Onesiphorus and others brought in their households. James had held out against Jesus during His life; but after Jesus had died and had risen and appeared to him, he got himself baptized out of love to his dead and risen Brother. So great was the power of the resurrection, so constraining was love of the family, living or dead. When these motives combined, and people believed in a great cloud of friends witnessing their earthly career, whom they might rejoin if themselves Christian, then they might take up the cross of baptism, despising the shame, and run

the Christian race, looking unto Jesus risen and at the right hand of God. But if dead people were not raised, why forego immediate pleasures for no future gain?

16¹, ². Among the **customs** Paul approved for all churches were: Asking directly for money to support the Lord's work; Systematic collections rather than spasmodic, voluntary rather than assessed; Special observance of the first day of the week.

16¹, ¹⁹. Here are two early tokens that Paul accustomed the churches to **associate**, and to associate on the lines of existing civil divisions. To maintain fraternal feeling between Jews and Gentiles, he was organizing a general collection for the poor at Jerusalem. The basis of organization was the Roman province; and so he always spoke of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, as befitted a Roman citizen. Compare Rom 15¹⁸—²⁹.

16², ¹⁶. Apparently the Corinthians had no treasurer, and were loth to respect even early and diligent converts. Their **democracy** was on the verge of anarchy. In after years they made the first known attempt to depose their officers, and received a horrified expostulation from the sister church at Rome. No wonder that Paul urged them repeatedly to do everything in love, and saw that much would need setting in order.

II CORINTHIANS

II Corinthians 1^{1}. The brethren in Achaia were evidently in touch with the church at Corinth, just as the brethren in Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee were linked with Jerusalem, and somewhat as the churches of Galatia and the churches of Asia formed two groups, I $16^{1, 19}$.

1^{22}. 'God also sealed us for Himself with the Spirit; the visible outward manifestation of His approval is in the multifarious **gifts** you enjoy, tokens to all beholders of His claim on you,' I 14^{22}; compare Acts 19^{6}.

A seal was something tangible, imprinted on an object to close it or to claim it or to acknowledge it; thus it was applied to a roll, Rev 10^{4}, 22^{10}; to a tomb, Matt 27^{66}; to a prison, Rev 20^{3}; to men, Rom 4^{11}, Rev 7. The metaphor of sealing is used in the New Testament for an external sign given by some one, to prove the existence of some quality in another, by evidence visible to all beholders. Thus Paul proved to the Hebrews the success of his gospel and the real conversion of the Gentiles by bringing up a collection they had made, Rom 15^{28}. The Corinthian converts were a visible proof given by God that he was an apostle, I Cor 9^{2}. The changed life in a man who accepted Christ's message was his endorsement that God is true, John 3^{33}. The power bestowed on Christ to work miracles was a token from God that Christ was commissioned from above, John 6^{27}. The miraculous

gifts of the Spirit stamped with His testimony the reality of conversion, Eph 1[13], 4[30]. The inward peace and outward purity of believers were God's vouchers that He owned them, II Tim 2[19].

It is not wise to extend the metaphor beyond this scriptural usage, as, for instance, to say that in the sacraments, "Christ and the benefits of the New Covenant are sealed to believers." It is legitimate only to this extent, that the church and its officers, who administer these ordinances to a candidate, thereby express their approval of his claim to be Christ's. In every other respect the analogy fails. The attestation is only by fallible men; God does not directly admit or debar a candidate. There is no direct pledge from God that He will fulfil His promises; His only visible representative is the local church; and if the presiding minister or the "priest" be of dubious character, what comfort can come to a participant? And most palpably the sacraments leave no visible or tangible token behind: an hour after administration the candidate is no more clean and no less hungry, and no one could tell through what ceremony he had passed. To outsiders they are no evidence at all, whether by physical sign or by moral proof.

2[1–11]. An offender had been **disciplined** by a majority vote on the advice of Paul, who now advised restoration as penitence was shown. Neither here nor anywhere else do we hear of their officers taking the lead. The church at Corinth seems to have been amorphous, with chance leaders, as often occurred in the political assemblies of Greek cities until reaction installed an irresponsible tyrant.

3[1]. A Christian changing his abode carried **commendatory letters**—from Jerusalem signed by James;

from Ephesus on behalf of the church, Acts 18^{27}; from Cenchreae a line by Paul in a long letter sufficed, Rom 16^{1}. Paul went where no churches yet existed; and though he had been commissioned from Antioch, he felt on a par with the Twelve, and disdained to rely on these credentials of inferiors; his case, of course, was an exception that could not persist long. The usual custom tended to link together the churches—an object peculiarly necessary with Greeks.

3^{2-18}. The Corinthians were so disorganized that they were sure to succumb to some despotic leader, unless a vigorous life could be aroused in them as in other churches. Their danger was not from sacramentalism, to which Greeks were not prone, but from a party extolling **learned teaching**, of which they were very fond. Perhaps they had been exhorted to follow the advice of James, and not be many teachers, but to rally round the chair of an authorized teacher trained in the orthodox schools of Jerusalem. Paul met the danger by a truly rabbinic exposition: 'Moses himself found the glory fade from his face shortly after he parted from Jehovah; Christian ministers are always facing the Lord, and beholding His glory, which constantly changes them into His likeness, and fits them for their ministry. The Law engraven on stones concealed Christ from those who studied it, John $5^{39, 40}$; the message of salvation given frankly and hopefully wins converts by the power of the Holy Spirit.' Rabbi as Paul had been, learned as he was, confronted with an unruly and talkative church as he found himself, yet he valued most that gift of prophecy that came direct from on high. A Christian minister can perhaps dispense with university and college training, but never with the influence of the Holy Spirit.

5^{20}—6^{10}. **The nature of the Christian ministry** is here set forth. A minister is God's ambassador and fellow-worker, yet His servant. He brings to men the message of peace, and entreats that it be accepted, commending the entreaty by his own endurance of wrong and slander, and by his positive helpfulness, all due to the Holy Spirit.

6^{14}—7^{1}. **Purity of fellowship** is here enjoined; the fellowship contemplated is chiefly that of the church, I 5^{9-11}, though the arguments apply equally to domestic life, I 7^{39}. If a church exists primarily as an embassy from Christ exhorting to purity, 6^{6}, then by the inclusion of an unbeliever the force of the message is broken, and the desire to deliver it is weakened. And this is true not only of open sceptics, but of such colourless uninterested people as are swept into a church by the dragnet of infant baptism.

8, 9. A fraternal feeling would be produced by the great **collection** for the poor in the church at Jerusalem; the example of Galatia was used to stir up Achaia, the readiness of Achaia to arouse Macedonia, the liberality of Macedonia to encourage Achaia again, and the co-operation of all to hint that Rome needed less isolation. For this purpose special letters were given by various churches to travelling treasurers, I Cor 16^{3}, II 8^{19}; Acts 20^{4}.

10—13. The authority of Paul was challenged by some teacher with letters of commendation. He declined to consider the possibility of comparison with such a man; his traducer might have borne a commission even from the apostles, but he was an apostle himself. His traducer harped upon signs and visions; he had mercifully forborne as yet to give such a sign as befel Elymas, but if they wanted such a sign they

might have it. He preferred to point to themselves, his converts, as proofs of his Divine commission.

This is all that is available to-day, as the age of apostles and miracles has passed. No amount of credentials can be as good as the visible proof of a gathered church, the best sign of a minister's call.

In these epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians, the subject of the validity of Paul's ministry was discussed from many sides, and he set forth in many ways his conception of a minister's duties. He never asserted that it was part of his duty to administer sacraments; nor did he ever associate them with the ministry. His opponents do not seem to have suggested that on the legitimacy of his call depended the "validity" of his converts' sacraments. Modern sacramentarians out-Judaize the Judaizers!

GALATIANS

The epistle to the Galatian churches of Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra was written after the conference at Jerusalem, which had settled that the Jewish Law was not binding on Gentile Christians. Paul had distributed the circular letter not only where directed, in Syria and Cilicia, but in Galatia too, Acts 16^{4-6}. Some of the narrow party, however, made a fresh attempt to commend The Law, suggesting that though not necessary to salvation, yet it was necessary to perfection, 3^{3}. This time the question of food was secondary, and the question of circumcision, initiating into Judaism, was in the forefront. The sudden defection of these churches called out this most vehement of all Paul's letters.

He narrated his call direct from Jesus, the way in which he had had little intercourse with the other apostles, and was recognized by them as an equal, with the field of the Gentiles as his own. He illustrated how faith was always the condition of God's favour, whereas The Law brought a curse ; how Abraham enjoyed a covenant that was available for all like him in faith, and was incapable of modification by a subsequent law. Once The Law had convinced of the need of a Saviour, and faith was exercised, The Law could disappear as outgrown.

In the general situation we see the same circumstances whose disturbance reached Corinth and Rome, and the doctrinal teaching in the greatest epistle seems a careful elaboration and arrangement of the radical thoughts here. Here are some of Paul's strongest expressions as to the utter abrogation of The Law, and the folly of turning back to such an elementary device.

Galatians $1^{1, 11, 12}$, 2^{6-11}. Paul vehemently insisted on his own direct call from Jesus and his utter independence of the apostles. The ordination at Antioch was not in question, for his opponents were asserting his inferiority to the Twelve. He utterly disclaimed all **Apostolic Succession**, whether of doctrine or appointment; recalled how, on the evidence of God's grace working through them, he and Barnabas had been recognized as colleagues by the Twelve, and how it had become his duty to rebuke one of those Twelve publicly. If Apostolic Succession was thus not important for an apostle, how much less is it now for a preacher? The one thing essential is a call from God direct, and the best proof of that to others is **success in ministry.**

1^{6-9}. The precise point at issue now was whether The Law, which admittedly could not obtain salvation or pardon from sin, was yet a **means of growth** in the spiritual life. The letter of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem had been explicit that it was not obligatory, but now the suggestion was that it might be a valuable means of discipline and grace. And of this doctrine Paul declared it was novel, a perversion of the gospel, and made its preachers worthy of a curse. The point was no longer that a man might be justified or forgiven by virtue of his keeping The Law; that

was given up here, though Paul carefully disproved it when writing to the Romans.

The exact reproduction of this error to-day is rare. Perhaps there is a tendency occasionally to test conduct by parts of The Law, instead of testing it by Christ's law of love; but that is a survival of a seventeenth century mode of thinking, rarely leading to evil results. What is a pressing danger is the developement of a new code of laws, **church traditions**, embalmed in creeds, catechisms, manuals of ritual, and conduct, etc. In "Catholic" circles it is granted that bare salvation may be had by repentance and faith, but that the spiritual life can only be adequately nurtured by a compliance with "Catholic" customs, including especially the sacraments. Against this Paul's arguments are of full force, and were applied with great vigour by Luther.

1¹¹—¹⁴. The Jews' religion and the **traditions** of the fathers were sharply contrasted with the gospel which helped to form The Church of God.

1¹⁷—2⁶. This is an explicit repudiation of the need for **Apostolic Succession.**

2¹⁵. This is, apparently, not a quotation of the speech to Peter, but a fresh address to the Galatians based on the speech. The Galatian churches had a strong Jewish and proselyte element, Acts 13⁴³, 14¹; and Paul generally used in this letter the Jewish name Kephas rather than Peter; and in 3¹³ spoke of Christ redeeming "us" from the curse of The Law, which never had anything to do with "sinners of the Gentiles."

2¹⁸—²¹. All sorts of metaphors were employed to express how out of date is The Law. He who shared Christ's experiences lived henceforth by faith: faith

obtained pardon, faith obtained daily grace; The Law did neither.

$3^{13, 14}$. Here is the germ of the argument in Rom 11: 'Christ accepted on behalf of us Jews the obligation of The Law, and endured its curse; thus He ended the interval, and allowed the long-delayed blessing of Abraham to come on the Gentiles. By the wonders thus wrought, we Jews in turn will be stirred to believe and receive the Spirit.'

3^{17}—4^{11}. This passage, that was the germ of another passage in Romans, may be thus paraphrased: 'Ever since Abraham, **the promise** has stood that, through one of his descendants, all the world should be blessed. Such is the basal covenant in which all the world is interested, which cannot be annulled or superseded; it must be fulfilled. Certainly there was subsequently a **Law** given to a fraction of mankind; but its purpose was to develope a sense of sin and ripen the desire for the Saviour. It was only **temporary**, till the Saviour came; it was given indirectly, not as the promise to Abraham; it concerned Jews alone, not Jews and Gentiles, who are all under one God. It was then additional, but not in the least conflicting.

'For the Jews, however, whom alone it ever concerned, it was a **hard jailer**, by its very hardness preparing a welcome for the Deliverer from jail. It was a slave leading home a schoolboy, to be neglected once he has brought the lad to the Father. It was a trustee and guardian during minority, to be thanked and honoured perhaps for faithful care, but to be discharged of the trust at majority. Christ opened the jail, introduced to the Father, declared that the set time had arrived; The Law henceforth was of no further service.

'Granted that some Galatian Christians are **Gentiles,** and never were under The Law, they **have reached God** by another way. Why should they wish to go and explore the way whereby the Jews came? They themselves have reached God, and that is the main point. Jews learned to read by painful drill in the ABC for years; Gentiles, beginning late, learned whole words at once. Both now can read; why should Gentiles fumble with the Jewish primers and spelling-books? Rather let both use the treasures of learning and go forward.'

3[27]. 'Those who pledged themselves in **baptism unto Christ,** thereby publicly declared themselves in touch with Him who should envelope them with protecting and enlivening power. Justification and sanctification are closely connected, spring alike from faith in Christ, and are both pictured in baptism.' The germ of another argument in Romans.

The phrase "into Christ" may be compared with "unto Moses" in I Cor 10[2]. It may, or may not, bear a deep mystic meaning, that he who accepts baptism in true earnest is really incorporate with Christ and testifies it in this way. It certainly does bear the meaning that the baptism tells not only of bare repentance, but also of faith directed unto Christ and of obedience promised unto Christ.

"Put on Christ" is a metaphor applied again to the Romans, who were addressed as baptized already. Therefore it cannot imply that the act of baptism itself unites a believer to Christ. Paul spoke of "putting on" the armour of light, tender mercies, love, the new man, incorruption, immortality. In every case he implied it was to be an act that was critical, not habitual; in no case but this is it mentioned in the same breath

with a ceremony. Evidently the change itself was vital, and the outward act only signified it.

That Paul referred to baptism at all was due to its being a definite act, once for all, that announced to all beholders the change of life determined on. Ceremonies in themselves effect nothing; but for a Gentile in Galatia to accept circumcision would show that he was bewitched, for a Hindu to drink from a Christian's cup would avow that he disregarded caste, for any man to ask for baptism would indicate his deliberate breach with the past. And so this outward and visible sign of the greatest event in a man's inner life was worth appealing to; like a marriage ceremony crowning the gradual developement of mutual love, it might be adduced as gathering and expressing all that had preceded it.

4[10]. These are, of course, the **Jewish festivals.** Paul kept some of them himself, I Cor 16[8]; Acts 20[16], 21[26]; but no longer because he was obliged to—simply to fall in with local customs and ingratiate himself with Jews, I Cor 9[20]. For Gentiles voluntarily to do so seemed ominous, as if white men coming into contact with the antique and antiquated civilization of China should adopt all its peculiarities, not for the sake of conciliating the Chinese and winning them, but, out of mere imitativeness, subjecting the men to the fashion of the queue and the women to the bondage of cramped feet.

That Christians as Christians should invent a **new series of days** with burdensome restrictions on liberty, of months for fasting, of seasons, whether for praise or penitence, of years of jubilee, was not in Paul's imagination. But his arguments, no less than his exact words, condemn such entanglement in a yoke of bondage.

5²—⁶. Circumcision in itself is as innocent as tattooing or shaving; but circumcision declared **necessary to perfection** must be sedulously refused. Quickly it would be edged in that it was necessary not only to perfection, but as the initial step towards salvation; then the whole wedge of The Law would be driven home, and Christ would be neglected. But to those who are in fellowship with Christ Jesus, circumcision and uncircumcision are as unimportant as the loss or presence of a front tooth. The one thing to be sure of is—not baptism, equally unimportant in itself, but—an active affectionate adhesion to Him.

5¹³, ¹⁴. Absolute freedom from The Law with all its restraints is not to be interpreted as freedom from all restraint. The **one command** given by Jesus Christ is not to be ignored because it is only one; it will be found to ramify endlessly, and apply to every case of conduct; it will effectually cut off occasion for yielding to the lower nature, for it will continually urge the developement of the higher, and the welding together of all who feel and exemplify love, 6².

6⁶. There were apparently regular teachers in these churches, for whom Paul required a salary. They may have been the elders of Acts 14²³; compare I Tim 5¹⁷.

6¹¹—¹⁶. In this autograph summary the **argument against ritualism** is re-stated. It will bear applying to any new system of ritualism put forward as a means of grace, or to any single rite. It will cut the ground from under the man who urges confession to a priest, or frequent communion as an indispensable help, or baptism as the condition for forgiveness of sins. What is vital—a rite, or a refusal to adopt it? Neither; the new life from above.

THE EPISTLES OF THE CAPTIVITY

Paul wrote to the Romans after a period of conflict for the rights of the Gentiles and their apostle, setting forth systematically that a great interlude of vast importance was over, that The Law was effete, and the Jews had no longer the exclusive importance they had held for fifteen hundred years; dwelling on the permanent value of faith, and the means whereby, when fixed on Jesus Christ dead and risen, it could obtain first pardon and then a bettered life.

In the few years since then, he had lived a life of comparative quiet and meditation in the seclusion of prison at Caesarea and Rome, and had witnessed the rise of new dangers from a pretentious scheme of philosophy that combined elements from Eastern thought with some from Jewish, and was ready to absorb a little Christianity. But as it assigned to Jesus only a minor place in the scheme of salvation, he warned the **Colossians** that Jesus was head over all things, and especially of The Church. In the epistle to the **Ephesians** he took the complementary thought and elaborated the doctrine of The Church as the Body of Christ. His lofty and mystical teaching warns not only against the errors of his day as reproduced in theosophy, but against the claims of a hierarchy of officers usurping the name Church, and against the

petty thoughts that confine the title absolutely to one and another of little companies labouring in semi-isolation. The Church, eternally designed as the means of glorifying Christ on earth and in heaven, is now actually growing by the mutual help of all its members gathered from all sources and quickened by the indwelling of the Spirit.

The epistle to the **Philippians** is mainly of thanks for their considerate gifts to him. He glanced, however, at the risk of rivalry and self-assertion among themselves, and repudiated the rival Jewish mission in Rome, warning them against a low standard of life.

These letters were sent from Rome, the seat of empire. They show a larger view of church affairs, befitting a statesman who contemplates the elaborate preparation before Christ, and realizes the magnificent destiny of Christ and His Church.

EPHESIANS

EPHESIANS 1^{3-14}. The work of God for and on the individual was recognized, but only to lead up to the summation of all individuals in Christ, along with all other beings, earthly and heavenly.

1^{13}. See II Cor 1^{22}.

$1^{22, 23}$. But while this loftiest theme was glanced at, attention was drawn to Christ's headship over The Church, and its correlative truth, the Church being the **Body of Christ.** If Christ fills all things, inspiring every thing that has existence, upholding all things by His indwelling presence, yet it is also true that the Christ who does this is not the human Jesus, nor that Jesus exalted on high, but that Jesus together with the multitude whom He has redeemed, incorporated with Him, who without them is incomplete.

"The fulness of Him." The English word is rather ambiguous, and even the word that Paul dictated was slightly ambiguous at the time, and soon became a highly technical term in an eclectic philosophy. The verb means literally to Fill full, and is used of a net, Matt 13^{48}, or a valley, Luke 3^{5}, or a house, John 12^{3}, Acts 2^{2}. The noun means **That which fills full,** and is used of the broken bread and fish put into baskets, Mark 8^{20}, of the contents or inhabitants of the earth, I Cor 10^{26}, of a piece of cloth patching a hole in a garment, Matt 9^{16}. It stands for anything that supplies

a lack or completes to perfection. Here the implication is that Christ, however great and glorious in Himself, yet gains in greatness and glory by the union of The Church with Him. If without Him the disciple can do nothing, Paul is bold enough to teach that without The Church, the Christ cannot do something. That something seems to be, taking His power and reigning, II Tim 2^{12}, Heb 10^{13}, Rev 11$^{15-17}$, 20^{4}. Compare Col 1$^{19-24}$.

2$^{11, 12}$. Literal bodily circumcision was here remanded to a very inferior place, the spiritual significance being the important thing.

Israel and the covenants had been all-important; ignorance of them or holding aloof from them once deprived of all true knowledge of God and all ground of hope.

2$^{14-16}$. But Christ broke down the barrier between Jew and Gentile, **The Law.** This had been **a cause of enmity** between them. The Jew tended to look down on the Gentile as not blessed with such a Divine code; the Gentile laughed at the Jew for his restricted liberty and his scrupulous ceremonialism. When Christ died on the cross, He thereby killed their mutual enmity by abolishing The Law of commandments contained in ordinances. And Jew and Gentile being thus on a level, and made one by this peace, the same death also made peace with God, and prepared the way for the creation from Jews and Gentiles of one new Body The Church.

2$^{20-22}$. The Church was like a building in process of erection. The apostles and prophets laid the foundation; Jesus Christ was the great corner-stone bonding together the walls. At many points apparently disconnected buildings were rising, presently to be joined by lintels and arches until all united into

one lofty temple, wherein God would then dwell in the person of His Spirit.

It is during the building that shallow thinkers are puzzled; they have not seen the plans, and see only confusion. One group of builders is far advanced and has arched in an alcove; another is busy with temporary scaffolding; another is pulling down scaffolding; others are at work separately and on parts of the building that do not match; others are away at the quarries; others are wondering how to comply with the plan in some detail; others are laying more foundation, others blasting away to clear more ground. The diversity seems disorder to onlookers, and even the workmen often get in one another's way. If too few go to the quarries and the supply of stone runs short, they are tempted to quarrel for the supply available and even to unbuild from one part to build up another; if too little ground is cleared and the supply of stone is abundant, they are tempted to build too high, so that a storm may send down a spire too lofty without lateral support. But builders who constantly refer to the plans and keep the purpose of the whole in mind, and put themselves under wise foremen, who best understand by patient study the Architect's design, may hasten the completion of the temple.

3^{2-12}. This glorious conception of The Church was staggering Paul with its grandeur; especially the antiquity of the design and the vast preparations made before Christ came and the foundation could be laid, the laying the whole world under contribution for the upbuilding, and the revelation through The Church to the universe at large of the depth of God's wisdom and love.

4^{1-7}. Such a conception should expel all petty

feelings as the magnificent scale of God's purposes was appreciated. What were the differences in comparison with the unity? The great temple of Diana at Ephesus was one structure, not a huddle of huts at all angles, with rival owners; it housed one image supposed to be fallen from heaven, not as the Pantheon with dozens of rival idols. Just so there might indeed be "several buildings" as yet, perhaps seven churches in Asia alone, but all should rise and be framed into **one holy Church**, the Body of Christ, indwelt by one Spirit.

'Provinces of the empire there might be with their pro-consuls, but there was the one King and Lord at Rome; distinct groups of churches there were with their different ministers, but there was the **one King and Lord**, Jesus Christ. Some Gentiles believed in Diana, some in Jupiter, some in Mercury, some in Pallas Athene, some in Mars, and others worshipped an unknown god, while the priests too often had no faith at all, and could hardly help laughing as they caught one another's eye; all Christians had **one faith** in Jesus as the Son of God. Gentiles had their lustrations with water or blood or filthier fluids still, Jews daily washed because daily unclean; Christians had the **one baptism** in water once for all and common to all, with its rich meaning including the thought of that one real infilling with the Spirit that gave new life to all alike. There was not a god for each town, men were not descended from many different and hostile stocks, Christ had revealed **one God and Father** of all, guessed at by some, but now known by His endless care and boundless love.'

If all Christians had these bonds of union, how absurd to dwell on the trivial variations between one and another! Each had some appropriate gift from

above suited to his nature; the source of the gift and the use to be made of it should attract attention, not the fact of variety in the gifts.

To-day it is painful to observe how inapplicable one phrase here has become. The word **Baptism** has been largely diverted to a new ceremony, performed on infants instead of disciples, and often interpreted in ways most diverse from apostolic teaching. Differing in form, in the subjects, in meaning, who can say this is one with New Testament baptism? We have a mournful instance of how thought is deadened by familiarity with words, in that Pædo-Baptists can quote this text without feeling condemned. They practise a different "baptism," which is no baptism, and sacramentarians hereby pervert the gospel of Christ. In contrast to Paul's ideal, the existence of the two rites, immersion of believers and sprinkling of infants, illustrates the lost unity of the Spirit and the ruptured bond of peace. How long will Evangelicals retain this remnant of Sacerdotalism, so inconsistent with their own principles?

4[11]. Early in the seventeenth century, the Puritans evolved from this and other passages, like I Cor 12[28], a scheme of church government which they claimed to be of Divine appointment for all time. Against them Hooker proved that there was **no uniform pattern** in practice during apostolic days, that there was no order for a uniform pattern, that there was no order for evolving any such pattern. To-day the Presbyterians hardly repeat the Puritan claim; Anglicans are inclined to make it for their own pattern, as are also the "Disciples of Christ," while Romanists and Methodists content themselves with saying that their schemes have evolved from the original pattern. The matter may

be excellently discussed in connection with the churches near Ephesus in the latest stage shown in Scripture: see note on III John.

4[11–16]. For a building, the workmen must be organized and taught their duties; clerks of the works and foremen are necessary, and at the outset of the work perhaps in greater number and with more initiative than when it is fairly going and the workmen have grasped the idea.

Christ gave **Apostles and Prophets** to lay the foundation; that laid, others could raise the superstructure, and the gift need not be renewed. But at the start there was need of special guidance by those directly and constantly in touch with the Architect: some trained under His eye for years, and with instructions to elaborate details; all still receiving special messages at critical times. He gave some with peculiar aptitude for arresting attention and proclaiming the good news, to pioneer in heathen lands, to traverse the country off the main lines of travel and thought, to arouse in cities a real vital religion instead of a careless verbal acquiescence. He gave others to watch over the converts thus gathered, and teach them what was implied in their pledge to serve Him. These **evangelists and teaching pastors** could organize the saints for work, articulate them together, assign to them their share in the two-fold work of helping the world at large and developing The Church, the transforming agent. So vast was the work that none should idle or remain almost parasitic, needing constant care, like babies; all were to aim at growth into perfect unity. The body has no superfluous parts, each contributes something to the well-being of the whole. The Body of Christ is to gather in and assimilate that which is without,

growing into closer union with its Head, ready for any service needed on the world or in the universe.

4[30]. See II Cor 1[22].

5[22—33]. So dominant was the thought of The Church as the Body of Christ that it caused constant digressions and illustrative comments in this exposition of the mutual duties of spouses. At one point the redemptive work of Christ was viewed as having a special relation to The Church, not in its active capacity, but passive, as cleansed by Him and **consecrated for service.**

The language here was highly figurative; but even in such a rhetorical passage Paul guarded against attributing any virtue to a washing with water, or a laver, apart from the word which reaches the heart. Compare John 15[3] and see note on Tit 3[5].

6[2]. This is the only recognition in the epistle that **The Law**, which as a whole caused enmity between Jew and Gentile, and was abolished, ever had contained anything of permanent value. But it is sufficient and explicit on the point.

6[23, 24]. The absence of personal greetings, which would have been numerous to Ephesus, and the absence of the address in 1[1] from the oldest copies of the letter, and the reference in Col 4[16] to a letter they were to get from Laodicea and read, have combined to produce the impression that this letter was not meant for the Ephesians only, but for the brethren at Colosse, Hierapolis, Laodicea, and other places near. Just as Paul wrote a **circular letter** to the churches in Galatia, he may have sent this to the churches in Asia, and so have set the example followed by John, Rev 1[4]. No church was encouraged to live in isolation.

PHILIPPIANS

PHILIPPIANS 1^{1}. The letter is for the saints generally; officers are mentioned after the general body. The community at this town was perhaps more fully organized than others at this time: we not only hear of bishops such as existed at Ephesus, but the word Deacon is used so as to show it was gradually being confined to recognized workers instead of being merely an epithet for any worker. The title Elder is not used. As the object of the letter was to thank for their gifts, 4^{10-20}, it is probable that the bishops and deacons had some special duties relating to business or finance.

1^{14}. Paul's hope that his presence in Rome would embolden the brethren to speak out was now justified; most of them were stirred, not officers alone.

1^{27}. 'Behave as citizens worthily.' The Christian's citizenship is in heaven, 3^{20}: Christ's kingdom is not of this world. His Church may be working and growing here, but essentially it belongs to the heavenly places in Him.

2^{17}. 'I am poured out as a drink-offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith.' The sacrificial imagery of Rom 12^{1} and 15^{16} was retained, but with a careful avoidance of the thought that any sacrifice except Christ's can atone. He anticipated his possible death, as in II Tim 4^{6}; but it is only a thankful

rendering back to God of His own, rendered acceptable through Christ.

3[2, 3]. Comparing with 1[17] and 2[3], we see that the Jewish-Christian faction at Rome had become decidedly hostile to Paul, and had the same old slogan :—We of the circumcision ! To this Paul now rejoined that he too had been circumcised ; but to trust in circumcision as such was carnal, not spiritual. The old literal circumcision had at best prefigured a change of heart ; those anciently **circumcised on profession of their faith**, like Abraham or the generation that conquered Canaan, had their modern representatives in Christians, whose worship was spiritual not ritual, who gloried in a crucified and risen Redeemer, and distrusted mere natural advantages. Let them beware of teachers who, like unclean dogs, fed not on Christ, but on the refuse from His table, Matt 15[26] ; who worked hard to win proselytes, but whose ends were evil, Matt 23[15] ; who insisted on mere bodily mutilation such as in itself God abhorred, Lev 21[5] ; whose end was perdition as Christ foretold, Matt 23[33], for they were really enemies of the cross of Christ. Such was his terrible indictment of mere ritualists. He would not play into their hands by retorting, "Ay, but we are the baptism" ; perhaps he saw no particular connection : he went to realities, not symbols.

4[3]. Apparently amid the saints generally, amid the bishops and deacons, there was **one man** or woman with some specialized duty : perhaps permanent secretary ; perhaps travelling evangelist halting there awhile ; perhaps their early guide, Luke, on another visit to them ; perhaps Lydia, the first convert.

COLOSSIANS

COLOSSIANS $1^{7, 23, 25}$. These uses of the term Minister, or, as it was translated in Ph 1^{1}, Deacon, show that it was not yet thoroughly established as a technical title of office to the disuse of the general meaning, Helper. Compare also 4^{7}.

1^{18}. Headship of The Church depended on being first born from the dead, just as that also proved Him to be Son of God in power, Rom 1^{4}. The thought here introduced was expanded when writing to the Ephesians.

2^{8-23}. The philosophy that menaced true Christianity was apparently an eclectic system with fragments of Parsee, Jewish, and Christian thinking all fused into one. Paul blamed it for its want of authority, it was a **tradition of men**, and its ordinances were precepts and doctrines of men; for its needless asceticism, "Handle not, nor taste, nor touch"; for its reversion to elementary observances. Those borrowed from Judaism were stigmatized afresh, and deserve notice separately.

$2^{11, 12}$. 'In Christ you received **regeneration**, that to which the circumcision made with hands looked forward. When Christ after dying rose again, having put off His fleshly body and assumed His heavenly body, He was in a sense spiritually circumcised. His experiences were virtually yours, anticipating them but implying them. In baptism you took the first step in His track, picturing your burial to the world and your regeneration

or rising again by faith in God. . . . Why, then, trouble any more about mere worldly observances?'

Figurative and allusive as is this sentence, at least Paul guarded himself from misconception by specifying a "circumcision not made with hands," something not literal nor material, as distinguished from the circumcision of the flesh next mentioned. It was not the old mutilation that he referred to, not the pictorial baptism which certainly was performed by hands, but the spiritual regeneration effected by the power of God.

$2^{14,15}$. **The Law** was compared to a bond cancelled; to a trophy captured from a foe and displayed openly as harmless, like the rams of hostile ships nailed up on a pillar in the forum.

$2^{16,17}$. 'Since then all the ordinances of The Law were blotted out by the death of Christ on the cross; there is no need to rescue any and re-enact them. Once they were useful, as shadows hint at coming events; but now that Christ has come in person, the shadows are inadequate caricatures.'

Even the **Jewish sabbath** falls under this sentence as much as any other Jewish institution. It was a sign between Jehovah and the children of Israel for ever, Ex 31^{12-17}. They were to remember that they had been slaves in Egypt and had been freed, therefore they were to keep the sabbath, Deut 5^{15}. The command was to Jews, the reason was for Jews: both were beside the mark for Gentiles. Yet the sabbath had another value; it had been designed to remind of the rest of God. If The Church is now repeating the work of God in some fashion—working at the creation of the new man in Christ Jesus—that work shall end, and there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God.

This is the substance of which the weekly rest-day was a shadow, Heb 4[4–10].

It is questionable if Paul himself valued the sabbath otherwise, or took any hint from it for a Christian weekly festival. He certainly never guarded this outspoken language, and explained that he was not referring to the **Lord's day**. "One man esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike: let each man be fully assured in his own mind." If any man finds himself helped by a Christian day, let him observe it, but not impose it on his neighbours: such seems his drift.

Evidently from the earliest times the majority of Christians did find such help. If Jews had been kept mindful of their bondage and deliverance by a weekly festival, Christians might remind themselves of a bondage to sin and deliverance from it, which was the personal experience of each one and not of a remote ancestry alone. The first day of the week was that on which the Lord had risen and signified to all that deliverance was accomplished; on that day had He appeared to His disciples, and again a week later; and again seven weeks later had bestowed the Holy Spirit on His waiting Church. What more natural than that the daily worship should be prolonged on that day with deeper fervour? So we hear of Paul advising Christian saving on that day, and stopping a week to preach at Troas on that day. The Jewish sabbath he disregarded on principle: a Christian Lord's day he would observe, if it helped others.

But he never would have borne the mere transfer of observances from one day to the next; that would have been the old intolerable Jewish yoke over again. What actually happened was that the new festival

struck root alongside the other, and the Jewish sabbath withered away in Christian circles till in a few centuries it was extinct. Nowadays, to try to observe the Lord's day according to the pattern of the Jewish sabbath is to painfully revive a few words in the blotted bond, to take down part of the trophy from the cross and use it for our own annoyance.

If the law of our land secures us a weekly holiday on Sunday, let us rejoice in the good gift that really comes from the Father. It affords opportunity for our mutual edification in worship, for our ministrations to the poor and sick, our training of the young, our evangelizing the heathen in the streets and parks and country. Such is the best way in which we can glorify the Lord.

But the Jewish sabbath ordinance was against us, contrary to us, and has been taken out of our way. The Puritan sabbath ordinances are only precepts and **doctrines of men.** Let those who esteem the Lord's day above others commend their doctrine by their greater devotion and energy then; those who esteem all days alike must esteem them all as the Lord's days, and use every particle of time and energy in His service.

4^{15-17}. Comparing with Philemon ^{1,2}, we find a little group of two city churches at Colosse and Laodicea, with two estate churches, the households of Nymphas and Philemon. Archippus, while connected with this last, received a warning through a sister church.

THESSALONIANS

The epistles to the Thessalonians are the earliest surviving of all Paul's letters, being sent back from Corinth a few weeks after his leaving the town. Although most of the converts had been Jews or devout Greeks, the wave of trouble about Judaism had not yet reached the town. In the short time of Paul's stay he had organized a church, I 1^{1}, on the same general lines as the churches in Judæa, I 2^{14}, with a few men who were presiding over them, I 5^{12}. He had given a few charges, I 4^{2}, and taught a few traditions, II 2^{15}, 3^{6}, as he was preparing to do at Corinth.

In these letters friendly intercourse with other churches is encouraged, I $1^{7,8}$, 4^{10}, II 1^{4}. Mutual discipline, I 5^{14}, II 3^{6-15}, a combination of work with worship, and purity, are the chief things urged. There are obscure allusions to Judaism and its temple as destined to be the enemy of Christianity, only restrained by the power of the State, II 2^{4-7}. The means of grace mentioned are at first the word, the gospel, I 1^{6}, $2^{8,13}$, II 2^{14}: and subsequently exhortation, whether oral or written, I 2^{11}, 3^{2}, $5^{11,27}$; then steady, everyday diligence, 4^{9-12}; prayer and prophecy, 5^{17-20}. There is not the faintest allusion either to The Law on the one hand, or to baptism and the Lord's supper on the other.

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

After Paul's imprisonment at Rome he seems to have been released, as he anticipated. The Romans of the next generation believed that he went on to Spain as he had intended, but no further allusions to that tour remain. From the three letters that remain it seems that he visited Corinth, where he left Erastus, and went on through Crete, where he won converts, and left Titus to organize churches; past Ephesus, where he left Timothy to organize the churches in Asia; by Troas, where he stayed with Carpus; to Nicopolis in Macedonia. The first epistle to Timothy and that to Titus were semi-official credentials and instructions how to organize. When he was arrested and sent to Rome, Titus and other coadjutors rejoined him and were soon despatched again, Tychicus to Asia, Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia, Timothy to some unknown province near Troas, perhaps Macedonia. He and Mark, last heard of near Colosse, were presently summoned to help Luke in ministering to Paul, who felt deserted not only by many of his churches, II 1^{15}, but by the brethren in Rome, II 4^{16}, and even by one trusted helper, II 4^{10}, his remaining friends being all of the Gentile wing, II 4^{21}.

One great interest in these letters is the way in which the apostle, feeling the time approach when his guidance must be withdrawn, made arrangements for the churches to work, both in separate affairs and together.

I TIMOTHY

I Timothy 1^{3-11}. The false philosophy that had invaded Colosse had now obtained many followers at Ephesus, and indeed in a few months more turned away nearly all Asia from Paul. A great feature in the doctrine was an elaborate **spiritualizing** of The Law, whereby it was made to shadow not Christ, but all sorts of things. In view of this, Paul went back to the plain literal meaning of The Law, and instead of trying to use it still for the Christian by the spiritualizing process which was now so grossly abused, he gave the simple alternative: The Law is not made for a Christian, but for bad men. Therewith he dismissed it and never touched the subject again. For other Jewish teaching he had two divisions—fables that led to wordy strife, and sacred writings able to lead to Jesus Christ the Saviour.

2^{7}. This appointment was by God, not man, Acts 26^{16-18}.

3^{1-13}. Two classes of officers were mentioned, the qualifications being practically the same. The name **Bishop** was familiar in this district before; but this time it is used in the singular, as if it were being gradually restricted to the chief of those who once shared the title; while the title **Deacon**, first met at Philippi as the name of an officer, now makes its appearance in Asia, with the suggestion that it was given to several similar officers.

3[15]. 'How [a man] ought to behave in God's house, which is the Church of the living God, [in which he is] a pillar and stay of the truth.' The ellipses in Paul's words are here filled in according to his use of the word Pillar for a **man** in Gal 2[9], a usage repeated in Rev 3[12]. The other term, too, is connected with the adjective Stedfast applied to men in I Cor 7[37], 15[58], Col 1[23]. Neither term is ever applied to a church or a community of any kind. In the same breath to call a church a house and a pillar, as in the English versions, is rather incongruous; but in The Church as a house every man may be a pillar and support.

To the old conception of The Church as God's house for the Spirit to inhabit, Paul now added another element derived from the work of the Spirit as guiding into all truth. False teaching was so rife that **true teaching** was assuming great importance. The emphasis laid on soundness of doctrine may be seen in nearly every chapter of these epistles; the function of ministers in guarding and spreading it is referred to often, I Tim 1[3, 4], 4[6], 6[20]; II Tim 2[15]; Tit 2[1]. Here he thought not of ministers alone, but of all guided by them. Therefore, fusing another of Christ's images, he compared The Church to a lighthouse, on whose summit blazed forth Christ, the beacon of Truth; in this edifice every Christian was a column supporting the truth. To hold aloft Christ for the gaze of the world, to uphold God's truth, this is the duty of The Church in general; and a man's right in The Church is tested by his fulfilling his share in this service.

The metaphor of the Church as a building is used once again at II 2[19, 20], worked out in yet another way. There, Christians are likened, not to the walls and pillars, but to the vessels in it. These are of all qualities and

for all purposes, but all alike are for the Master's use. To be fit for this, men must be cleansed from the profane babblings of erring teachers. Thus if the illustration varies slightly, the application is the same.

The language will apply either to The Church as a whole or to each of the several local buildings which were growing together into a holy temple. Any organization, local, national, world-wide, which claims to be part of The Church, must answer to these tests, that its members are upholding Christ as the Truth, and are departing from unrighteousness. Every church is to be pure and missionary.

4[1–5]. The practical side of the Colossian theosophy comes out at this point. It is marvellous that a still existing organization professing to be Christian can forbid all its upper officers to marry, and command all its members at regular intervals to abstain from meats.

4[11–16]. Timothy had three claims to obedience: he had been ordained by the elders of Lystra in obedience to prophetic indications, 1[18], his duties being apparently to help Paul in any way. At that time he had been specially endowed with some gift of the Spirit; he had recently been commissioned by Paul to exercise oversight round about Ephesus. But these qualifications, of which two were technical rather than vital, needed to be sustained by **diligent study** and practice, and by the example of a **consistent life**. As modern ministers rarely can claim to have been designated by prophecy or to enjoy special endowments of the Spirit, this advice as to the means of deserving respect and influence is even more noteworthy.

5[1, 2]. The word Elder here is so contrasted that it bears no official significance, simply meaning older men. Compare also Tit 2[2].

5[3—16]. The example set by the church at Jerusalem of caring for the **widows** seems to have been copied and developed, till there is a hint of a pledge being taken from them[12] on enrolment,[9] and a custom of daily prayers. It was apparently on this stock that a bad scion was afterwards grafted; and girls who were "forbidden to marry" were enrolled and pledged to a round of prayers, so that there arose an order of nuns, whose conduct soon verified Paul's words,[11—15], and caused great scandal.

5[17—22]. The word **Elder** here is evidently official. It bears primarily its old Jewish sense, denoting one of the rulers; but whereas Jewish elders were only connected with the synagogue by virtue of their appointing the Ruler of the synagogue who conducted the worship, Christian elders from the time of Stephen and Philip had taken leading parts in personal teaching. Paul therefore directed that in paying the elders, salaries should be adjusted to their ability in management and in instruction.

The appointment of elders was to be undertaken with caution; but, once installed, they were to be guarded from frivolous slander. Proved sin was to be openly reproved, as at Antioch. There was no word as to tenure of office or possible deposition.

For the relation of elders to bishop and deacons, see comment on III John.

6[12]. Either at baptism or at ordination a public confession of faith was made.

II TIMOTHY

II Timothy 2^{2}. Comparing II Cor 5^{19}, where Paul said that Christ committed to him and others the word of reconciliation, and I Tim 1^{12-18}, where he referred to his own appointment for service along with his committing the same charge to Timothy, with this passage where he bade Timothy in turn commit his preaching to other faithful men, that they may carry on the work of preaching, we see the importance of a line of teachers to **transmit apostolic teaching**. This device was familiar to Paul, since it was customary in the schools at Jerusalem where he had sat at the feet of Gamaliel, and inherited the traditions from earlier teachers. It is, however, always possible that mere oral tradition, despite the many witnesses to it, shall become distorted in course of time : even the Jews found it necessary at last to commit theirs to writing. James and Paul had led the way in Christian circles, and within a few years of this letter many traditions about the ministry and death of Jesus were committed to writing, while several pastoral letters to churches and groups of churches had passed into general circulation. After that, the oral teaching of the succession here contemplated would become far less important than the writings of the original teachers. It is noteworthy that he never connected these teachers with the performance of ritual.

A comparison of these passages with I Tim 4^{14}, which referred to the original ordination of Timothy by presbyters or elders of Galatia, has suggested to Catholics a scripture basis for their doctrine of **Apostolical Succession.** But it should be observed that Paul and Timothy were travelling evangelists, who never spent more than three years at any one place. The case of stationed ministers is not touched here, unless we infer that evangelists should be ordained by elders, which is quite another matter. Further, it is not implied that the succession is of value except as transmitting accurate teaching. Now that the Testament is in print, any one can learn the teaching of Paul and others from early documents, and not need fifty subsequent generations of ministers. Again, it is not implied that accurate and useful teachers cannot arise outside the succession; and the scanty records in the Acts and elsewhere as to early churches show no importance laid on succession, and render it improbable in many cases. Moreover, whereas Catholics lay stress on the imposition of a bishop's hands, we read of the elders acting here; and they do not answer to the modern bishop, who has no counterpart in the New Testament: presbyterial succession is more plausible than episcopal. And, finally, that a mere rite, such as laying on of hands, should be vital is contrary to all New Testament principles.

2^4. The legions of Paul's day were largely in garrison, where they remained for perhaps a century, recruited locally, marrying and having homes. But soldiers were even at the moment of writing being summoned from garrison, homes, and families, to go on service and crush the rebels of Palestine. Modern ministers fall into two great classes, those on garrison

duty in lands long Christianized, and those on active service in heathen lands—with unhappily too few in the latter class. Paul's experience and advice point to the advisability of **foreign missionaries**, questioning seriously whether they have the gift of celibacy, I Cor 7^{7}. Livingstone's work in his widowhood would have been impossible while he had family ties. How many foreign missionaries have to abandon their work for the sake of wife and children ?

$2^{19, 20}$. See I 3^{15} and II Cor 1^{22}.

3^{14-17}. The theosophy of the day on its practical side was repressive and self-centred, having as its watchword, Abstinence ; on its theoretical side it was expansive, with the watchword, Knowledge. To this Paul opposed a Christian philosophy, with the important safeguard of a **definite body of writings** and a tolerably well-defined body of oral teaching. The Jewish scriptures breathed the Divine ; they were first useful to lead men to Christ Jesus for salvation, but also they were mines of wealth for the Christian afterwards. Add to these the facts about Jesus Christ's life and death, constantly taught by word of mouth, and there was knowledge sufficient. The fault of the other insatiable learners was that they wanted knowledge for its own sake, without considering its bearing on conduct ; and as truth is unlimited, but our opportunities here are limited, they could undoubtedly learn and learn for a lifetime, without ever arriving at perfect knowledge of the truth ; while failing to apply their knowledge, and only hedging their path by arbitrary restrictions, they stumbled grievously in many matters of morality. The apostles were guided by the Spirit into all needful truth, and their words supply all we yet need to know of God and His demands from us. Add to the Jewish

scriptures what has been subsequently committed to writing of apostolic teachings ; interpret the Bible thus collected for us with ordinary common sense and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, avoiding foolish and ignorant questionings, fables, and endless genealogies, and we may be completely equipped for every good work, adding to the form of godliness the power thereof.

TITUS

Titus 1^{5-9}. Compare I Tim 3^{1-3}, 5^{17-22}, III John.

3^{5}. This is the latest passage of its kind, and presumably represents the most developed doctrine of Paul as to **baptism and regeneration**. He had told the Romans that confession is made with the mouth unto salvation, and the Ephesians that Christ cleansed The Church by the washing of water with the word. This passage combines the personal element in the one message with the ritual in the second. It may be compared with the ritual language in Heb 10^{22}, where a literal sense is repeatedly and explicitly disowned in such phrases as "heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these"; "blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins."

Baptism is an institution to which in its early stage of developement our Lord yielded obedience; into it He breathed fuller meaning. He enjoined His disciples to administer it to converts, and they apparently as a matter of course suggested it in the course of preaching, and ordered their converts to be baptized. It was the outward acknowledgement of the inward change of heart, the token of a breach with the past, and an enrolment into a new community, a symbol of regeneration by the Holy Spirit from the death-in-life of former existence. The language here is easily understood with these recollections.

But literalism of the kind that fashioned the doctrine of transubstantiation has fashioned also the twin doctrine of regeneration in and by baptism. There is a germ of truth in this monstrous error: for a man who shrinks from testifying by the pictorial act commanded by his Lord, his regeneration already accomplished, raises grave doubts as to his intelligence or his allegiance. A bride who refuses to go through any marriage service except one of her own devising, which does not meet her bridegroom's wishes, flouts society at large, and may well be suspected of not really loving her chosen companion. A soldier who refuses to wear uniform and take the oath of allegiance, risks a great deal at the hands of his foes, shuts himself out from comradeship, and tries the patience of his commander. And so it is hard to repel the charge that he who studies the Bible on this point, and yet refuses baptism, cannot be regenerate, even while we add that many err here by inattention and by a false tradition of their sect.

Yet it is quite another thing to say that while deliberate refusal of baptism suggests unregeneracy, the conferring of it regenerates. Two errors are often made here. Baptism is properly a profession that the candidate is already regenerated; but false professions can be made in deed as well as in word, of which Simon Magus is a warning. For baptism to be administered to infants who can make no profession at all, is absurd on the face of it; therefore the habit of infant baptism can only be defended by reasons which lean to the conclusion that it confers benefits rather than registers them: and against this all scripture protests.

HEBREWS

In the earliest days of The Church, the Hebrews or Aramaic-speaking Jews were the most important, Acts 6^{1}. Gradually the leaven spread, the Hellenists or Greek-speaking Jews soon became more important outside Judæa, and then Gentiles flocked in and won a footing on equal terms. The Hebrews looked askance at this change, and were to the last suspicious of Paul and his Gentile churches. Whether he won the vote in the conference at Jerusalem that The Law was not binding on Gentiles, whether he spiritualized The Law to the Galatians, whether he explained The Law to the Romans as a bye-gone interlude, whether he at last dismissed it as useful only to bad men, always he failed to win their assent. When they lost the guidance of James, murdered in the temple by the old "orthodox" Jews for his "heresy," they saw that soon they would have to choose between Judaism and Christianity. As Christians, if they clung to observance of The Law for themselves, without urging it on others, they would indeed be tolerated, but were in a small minority. As Jews they might be welcomed back if they would waive the exclusive claims of Jesus, and look on Him as a great prophet, or perhaps even an angel such as came to earth from time to time. The temple was in danger, its ritual was maintained with difficulty; did it not become every loyal Jew to sink sectarian differences

and rally, as in the days of Judah the Maccabee, to defend the holy place and its priests from the sacrilegious Gentiles?

The time was ripe for some one to expand the hints dropped by Paul that **The Law was a shadow of good things to come**, to show the correspondence of the reality to that dim forecast, to unveil Jesus in the rites and ceremonies of The Law, and show again in what sense Moses wrote of Him. There were many prophets like Barnabas, the Levite, the great exhorter; or like Apollos, who could argue powerfully with Jews from the scriptures; or, like his teachers, Prisca and Aquila, knowing not the temple itself, only the tabernacle as described in The Law; or like Silas, a friend of Timothy and a prominent member of the church at Jerusalem; not themselves claiming firsthand knowledge of Jesus, yet able to build up churches, maintain harmony, and steady the wavering with a word of exhortation.

For the last time, then, before God interposed and, by destroying the temple, rendered it impossible for any one to keep The Law, the matter was argued sympathetically. Paul had dealt mainly with those precepts that touch conduct; here those that prescribe worship are mainly considered. The verdict is the same, "Abolished as inefficient, look to Christ alone."

The epistle is peculiarly valuable to-day, as setting forth the true doctrine of **Priesthood**. In Luther's day the great question was how a man could obtain salvation, whether by a meritorious life according to the precepts of his religious teachers, or by trust in Jesus Christ. The Saxon friar fought out the battle with the help of Paul's writings to the Galatians and Romans, showing that The Law had been discarded as soon as Christ died, and that to revive it or anything akin to it

as a means of grace was an anachronism. To-day the question is slightly altered: salvation admittedly is from Jesus Christ and is free; but emphasis is laid by the Romanists on the necessity for human mediators or priests. They and they alone can accept the vows whereby a youth confirms the pledge given in his name when an infant, and they alone can steady him by imparting grace; they must hear his confession of sin, and they alone can bestow on him absolution; they and they alone can offer the sacrifice of the mass, producing anew the body and blood of our Lord, and repeating the sacrifice offered on Calvary. Doctrines like these, taught under the auspices of Rome for centuries, have during the last seventy years leavened the Church of England, so that they are now proclaimed from half the pulpits in the land. The danger was not unforeseen by God, and from His treasury may be drawn forth this epistle, which proclaims that one only act of atonement was needed, and that this was rendered by Jesus Christ once for all; that a High Priest was indeed needed, and that Calvary was His altar; that He is now within the veil carrying on the work of intercession; that no other mediator is needed; that material ceremonies are vain for spiritual benefits; that every one who unites himself to Jesus shares in His priesthood, has access to God, and is bound to use it in praise, beneficence, and intercession for the world.

A paraphrase of the argument from chapter 4^{14} onwards may be presented, omitting two interludes, on backwardness and on faith, and the particular applications to the circumstances of the time. Notes on special passages follow.

4^{14}—5^{10}. 'Do not relapse into ritualism; we have a **High Priest in Jesus**, who is now in the Holy of Holies

pleading sympathetically, and who **offers both mercy and help**. He was chosen by God from among us, was qualified by His suffering and obedience, was called to offer both gifts and the sacrifice for sin, which obtains eternal salvation for all that obey Him.

7^{1-25}. 'There was an **ancient priesthood** before that of Levi, and greater, for Levi's sire acknowledged it by accepting its blessing and rendering it tithe. Even when under The Law the Aaronic priesthood was instituted, a revival of the old was expected; for while Aaronic priests were working, an utterance sounded out as to a priest like Melchizedek. (Granted that this was contrary to The Law, the oracle then condemns The Law as a whole.) Aaronic priests held office by an arbitrary appointment of a family. Jesus had shown Himself fit by His character, tested and permanent. Therefore the arbitrary appointment, under which nothing profitable had been effected, was revoked; and, indeed, with this one detail fell all The Law, condemned for the same reason. The object of all religious institutions being to bring men into contact with God, and this institution having resulted rather in keeping them aloof, it was abolished, and a new **means of access to God** was provided, on the older lines, that had been not for Jews alone, but for all. This was solemnly declared permanent, and so was obviously better; and instead of a mere mechanical succession, there is now one standing Intercessor, really able to save.

7^{26}—9^{28}. 'He is Man, and able to act for men as priest. But He is separated from us sinners by His holiness. Not needing personal forgiveness, He can act as **High Priest, making one only sacrifice**, of Himself. Crown, then, these thoughts about priests [which indeed are true of all united to Him, and allowed

to offer gifts, and think of the sacrifice for sin]. The real original sanctuary is in heaven; the tabernacle of Moses was but a shadowy copy. Jesus is now High Priest on high. True that under the covenant at Sinai He could not be Priest on earth; but He is Mediator of a better covenant. Even Jeremiah felt the old one to be faulty and decrepit, and foretold a new one. Under the old there were elaborate arrangements, not for access to, but for exclusion from God: only one man once a year could draw near, and then only after artificial observances that might remind of sin, but could not satisfy the conscience. But Jesus has gone into heaven, the original and real holy place, having made not pictorial but real atonement for sin, and thereby having relieved burdened consciences. Moreover, this same sacrifice of an eternally obedient sinless man also **ratified the new covenant** foretold, and availed to blot out previous sins under the old covenant. Nothing could be done by mere ritual, however often repeated; His death once for all was effective to break the power of sin. When He reappears from heaven it will be to lead back those who are saved from its rule.

10^{1-25}. 'The tabernacle ritual reeked with blood—a mere symbol for life. Real atonement demanded more than an involuntary death of animals. Torrents of material blood could at best keep sin in mind, but could not **appease the conscience.** A life of willing obedience, a death of willing submission, these can both blot out sin and stamp deep on the heart the requirements of God. These Jesus has given once for all, and as High Priest has entered heaven. Though our mortal bodies yet veil from us the inmost glories, we, too, are priests, and may draw near. We are qualified,

technically by our priestly consecration in baptism, really by a cleared conscience. Let us then hold fast our priesthood granted through Him, and realize our solidarity and our joint service.

10[26]—13[16]. 'Even as nothing else is needed but the one sacrifice, so nothing else is available; its virtue avails for ever. On our side nothing is needed but constancy in cleaving to Him while we await Him. This is no new thing; even the saints of yore had to await their redemption, not receiving the fulfilment of their promises, but patiently expecting the consummation of this sacrifice. Endure, then, with all patience. The old covenant was inaugurated with fear, and the covenanters were warned off from God; the new with love, and the covenanters are invited near. Our ancestors refused to listen to God, and begged for some human mediator. Do not refuse to listen to Jesus, do not beg for mere human priests instead. You are yourselves priests; offer your sacrifices for yourselves, like Him, 5[7]. Amid all change, cleave to that which abides—to Jesus ever the same. **Be not seduced into reliance on ritual.** The old is effete, though once divinely given; do not adopt novel devices of men and trust in sacramental meals. Grow by grace; ritual was always unprofitable, and is now fulfilled. The cross was our altar; there the only atoning sacrifice has been offered. We priests may now offer the incense of praise or bring the peace-offerings—gifts to be shared with God's poor.'

1[1]. The letter was a series of contrasts between **old Judaism** and **new Christianity.** The keynote was struck at the outset. Former revelations from God came piecemeal and in varied form, as Law, prophecy,

history, vision, sign, type; the revelation through Christ is complete in itself and final.

1^{5}—3^{6}. The next contrast was between the **mediators** of the two covenants. If many believed with Stephen, Acts 7^{53}, and Paul, Gal 3^{19}, compare Deut 33^{2}, that The Law was announced through angels, the superiority of Jesus to them was proved. And the next link being Moses, he was ranked only as a trusty servant in comparison with the Son. The conclusion is easy to draw, that the New Covenant has greater glory than the old.

4^{4-11}. The deepest meaning of the **Sabbath** was taught here. The Law was annulled in all its branches, as was presently proven, so no reference was made to the Jewish sabbath; but ages before Jews were separated out there were facts that suggested a promise of a season of rest after holy toil. This still holds; but to enjoy it there must first be the toil, in Christ's service, to win the world.

5^{1}. The necessity of some **priesthood** was taken for granted. Deep in the heart is the instinct that some one is needed to represent men before God, expressing both gratitude and repentance. Heathen in all ages had such men; Jews had such appointed and taught by God. Christians equally feel the need, and unless we fully grasp that Jesus is our High Priest, who has made the only adequate sacrifice for sin, and who exalts every single believer to be a priest for offering gifts, praise, and intercession, we are ready to fall victims to any usurpers who claim priesthood over us with exclusive rights.

5^{4}. Here is at once the death-blow to any such assumption. Aaron was called, and his call included all descended physically from him, 7^{10}. Jesus was called,

and His call included all descended spiritually from Him, Eph 1⁴. He who is **born again** into the Divine family inherits the priesthood, Rom 8¹⁷. No other title to it exists, nor has any third order of priesthood been recognized or instituted by God. Compare John 1¹³.

6¹, ². A very suggestive list of first principles, to which many still confine themselves. Some Christians revolve around **doctrines**, such as repentance and faith, and never go beyond the beginning of the Christian life in an individual, thinking little of a pilgrim's progress or of joint church life. Others are attracted by **ritual**, and if the distinction between ordinary Jewish immersions and John's baptism and Christian baptism has long been unimportant, and laying on of hands is once again a mere symbol conveying neither healing nor grace, then they devote themselves to other petty questions: May we not substitute some other ceremony with water for baptism? Must we not lay on a bishop's hands in confirmation after baptism? Or they raise similar questions about mere human inventions, and discuss days and seasons, architecture and millinery. Others cannot get away from **the future**, and, steeping themselves in the apocalyptic parts of the Bible, calculate how many resurrections there will be, when each is due, and what is the characteristic of each judgement. All such err by exaggerated attention to one portion of elementary truth instead of pressing on to all-round perfection of Bible knowledge and of Christian character, which can only be attained by appreciating the missionary purpose of The Church and of each believer, and fulfilling this priesthood.

6¹⁹, ²⁰. The doctrine of the **priesthood of all Christians** is not in the forefront of this epistle, which is occupied by the priesthood of Christ. Yet again and again it

peers out. Jesus has entered within the veil as our forerunner. Aaron did not enter within the veil as a forerunner, but as a representative. The difference implies our priesthood and our fellowship with Jesus, already existing, but not yet perfected.

7^{16}. The contrast with the Aaronic priesthood is vivid. Aaron's choice was quite arbitrary; Moses was more than once offered the post, Aaron was only a second choice, and he never displayed any special fitness. The choice of Jesus was due to His power, the spiritual energy inherent in Him. Aaron's line was continued by mere physical descent, and inevitably included many worthless people. Jesus was endowed with life that could not be dissolved, and also that could be imparted and would assimilate others to Himself.

8^{3}. Priest and sacrifice are correlative terms; each involves the other. So **sacerdotalism** and **sacramentarianism** are twin errors: believe one, and the other must follow; destroy either, and the other must die. Once let the term Priest be applied to a minister specially, or Sacrifice to the bread and wine, or Altar to the communion-table, and history has shown often the widening of the breach in true evangelicalism. Once admit that in baptism and the Lord's supper such grace is bestowed as can come in no other way, and soon a special minister for these will be sought, and their observance will be exalted above preaching; whereas such mere manual acts were often remitted to inferiors, while our Lord and the apostles would not baptize or serve tables, but proclaimed salvation.

$9^{9, 10}$. All the Jewish rites were at best burdensome ordinances affecting only the body and unable to **ease the conscience.** If this was true of them, appointed by

God for awhile, how utterly foolish to invent others of the same physical type! How contrary to the spirit of this utterance as to meats and drinks and divers baptizings is any reliance on the efficacy of bread and wine and sprinkling, or even immersion.

10[1, 3]. The Law was not a living Christ, not a statue of Him, not even a good picture, only a shadow. The best it did was to keep the fact of sin vivid, to make the consciousness of accumulating sins burdensome.

10[9, 10]. The exact analogue of sacrifices was here pointed out, Christ's **doing God's will**, not only in life, but in offering His body on the Cross. The priest was Jesus; the altar was the cross; the sacrifice was the body which had been bestowed on the Eternal Son and used by Him solely for God's glory; the blood was the life pure and holy presented in heaven. God's acceptance of this betokened His cancelling the unfitness of men and recognizing them as entitled to come to Him. A man's acceptance of this as offered on his behalf removes his sense of guilt and emboldens him to approach God.

10[22]. According to Lev 8[30, 6], a priest must have his body sprinkled with blood and washed with pure water before entering on his duties. **Baptism** continues after a fashion this formal initiation to a real priesthood, but the qualification is adhesion to Christ whereby the conscience is cleansed. It is impossible to take the second clause literally and not the first; so it is impossible to argue hence that baptism, even of a believer, in itself affects anything.

10[26]. There is no other sacrifice for sins; one only was made, and its efficacy is enduring. It cannot be repeated; it can be called to mind, it can be **commemorated** as He enjoined, but it can in no sense be offered afresh.

JAMES

James had the honour of being the first Christian to recognize the importance of literature and to pen an epistle to the brethren. It is curious that in our Bibles his letter to Jews follows that other which was sent also to Jews some twenty years later.

He wrote in a very early stage of organization, when Nazarenes still met in synagogue, 2^{2}, possibly with "orthodox" Jews, yet had an inner ring called a "church" with elders of their own, 5^{14}. Of outward worship he had next to nothing to say. His idea of ritual was intensely ethical and practical, 1^{27}; and when he did advise a rite, he expressly attributed all efficacy to the prayer of faith, 5^{14}. Even while insisting on outward acts, he spoke of regeneration without a glance at baptism, only at preaching, repentance, and faith, 1^{18-22}.

Writing before the great controversy as to the standing of the Gentiles, he yet showed plainly his firm grasp of one fundamental fact, that Jesus is the only Lawgiver, 4^{12}, and that with royal authority He singled out from scripture one precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Nor was James less clear that an undertaking to keep The Law of old is an undertaking to keep it in every respect, so that in practice every one transgresses it and had better hold simply to the new law of liberty, 2^{8-12}. The general

purpose of the letter was to give ethical counsel, not to develope doctrine. One of the leading thoughts was reproduced from the teaching of Jesus, that profession without performance was worthless. For a man to be slothful and selfish, a church to be engrossed with its own concerns and not active in working for the winning of the world, was to belie the name of Brother or the profession of faith in Christ, $1^{25, 27}$, 3^{13}, $5^{19, 20}$.

I PETER

PETER showed in this epistle the essential unity of all the apostles, and the falsity of the teachers who set him in opposition to Paul. Paul was now in prison or dead—his churches in Galatia and Asia could not profit by his presence; so Peter took up the oversight and sent his circular letter to them with others. Of inner church life he insisted on the priesthood of all believers and the need of humility in officers. Of outer church life the great problem was relation to a State that was showing itself hostile and persecuting.

I Peter 2^{1-10}. Whatever was written of the children of Israel in olden time has its meaning for The Church also. The house of Israel over which Moses ruled as a trusty servant prefigured this spiritual house; the nation chosen at Sinai to be a holy priesthood was but a sketch of the **Christian priesthood**; the material offerings of bulls and goats and corn and wine and oil and incense were but suggestions of spiritual sacrifices. What psalmists sang and prophets saw is now plain in Christ and His Church.

To add to the spiritual the material, is childish. If we have never seen Niagara, we thank the photographer who brings us a picture; but if we go and dwell by the gorge, the pictures are inadequate and even offensive. Temples and priests and sacrifices were well for those who could not borrow Moses' eyes to gaze on the reality

in the holy mount, but when Christ has offered the atoning sacrifice and entered into heaven as our forerunner, lifting us to be His helpers in the service of praise and kindness, what need we with revivals and adaptations of Judaism?

Nor did the apostle depreciate these because he valued some corresponding **Christian rites** and sacrifices. He spoke of regeneration, $1^{3, 23}$, and of baptism, 3^{20}, but they were not connected; he spoke of the body of Christ and His blood, 2^{24}, 1^{19}, but did not associate them with the Lord's supper, nor with the means of sustaining the spiritual life, 2^{2}.

$2^{11—17}$, $3^{13—17}$, $4^{12—19}$. Peter was confronted with the new and terrible situation that to be a Christian was to be a bad citizen in the judgement of **the State**. Christianity was a crime, as much as burglary. The Roman power had for a generation protected Christians against their Jewish foes; but Paul's had been a leading case, and the accusation that moved Pilate, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend," and drove Paul out of Thessalonica, "He says there is another King, one Jesus," was sure to be laid before Nero. Paul was condemned, and his case established a new precedent.

Peter urged that they prove their loyalty by willing submission and obedience, that they prove the folly of the new practice by conspicuous good behaviour, and that they thus gradually show good Christians to be necessarily the best citizens.

Yet in a sense Nero was right. So long as he claimed to be supreme, and fashioned the State on his own whims, so long was conflict inevitable. A Christian owed and paid allegiance above all to Christ, and if Nero gave contrary orders, they would certainly be disobeyed.

On Nero's theory of his own irresponsibility every Christian was a rebel at heart. It took two hundred and fifty years to convince his successors that the king was only supreme in a sense, and that all existing authorities were responsible to God. To Him there are common duties, between subject and ruler there are mutual duties. 'Citizens, obey them that on earth are your governors, as servants of Christ; and, ye governors, remember that He who is both their Governor and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with Him.'

2^{25}. Since everything Christ did and suffered, except His atoning work, is a pattern for a Christian, it was natural to transfer these titles Pastor and Bishop from earthly officers back to the heavenly **Head of the Church.**

3^{20},^{21}. The leading thought of this sentence is at 3^{17}, that suffering is the common fate of the righteous. Illustrating by the case of Christ, the apostle introduced several bold figures, digressing further and further until he abruptly resumed the original thought at 4^{1}. As the construction is involved and several words are ambiguous, a new literal translation is offered and justified, then a paraphrase in shorter clauses is given, and one or two comments are added.

". . . while an ark was being prepared, [going] into which few (that is, eight souls) were saved through water. This, its counterpart, now saves you, too, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ; [namely,] baptism—not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the request to God for a good conscience."

That the word [going] is implied is evident from the fact. They did not wade through water into the ark,

but they went in before the rain began, Gen 7[4–10]. The word is often omitted before the preposition Into, as in Acts 8[40], Philip went to Azotus and was found there; in Acts 21[13], Paul was ready to go to Jerusalem and die there; Heb 11[9], Abraham went into the land and stayed there.

"Were saved" is really a rather strong word, used in Acts 23[24] of the soldiers bringing Paul through the forty assassins safe to Felix; in Acts 27[43], of the centurion saving him from the murderous soldiers; in Acts 27[44], 28[1, 4], of the refugees escaping through the sea.

"Were saved through." The doubling of the preposition in the Greek compels us to abide by the literal sense, and not to understand "by means of." Indeed, the word often implies "through the danger of," as in Luke 4[30], through the hostile Nazarenes; in Luke 5[19], through the multitude and through the tiles that blocked the way; in II Cor 11[33], through the confining wall; in Heb 11[29], through the Red Sea hemming them in; in I Cor 3[15] and I Pet 1[7], through fire. In these and other cases the preposition cannot indicate the means of escape, but the obstacle or danger from which escape was sought. And in this case the water was no means of escape; it was actually drowning multitudes, and Noah was only saved from it by being in the ark.

"Which" can hardly refer to the single word Water, unless we make the sentence even more involved than need be. It may refer to the whole fact last mentioned, as in Acts 11[29, 30], Gal 2[10]. Two other words are added to explain, Antitype, Baptism. Our word Antitype, however, has a more definite meaning than is intended here, and the R.V. gives a paraphrase.

"The request to God for a good conscience." The noun as to which the R.V. is so uncertain is very rare,

and only occurs in the Greek Bibles once, at Dan 4^{17}, Demand. The corresponding verb means either to Ask or to Ask for, which latter sense will be found at Ps 137^{3}, Isa 7^{11}, Matt 16^{1}. The simple verb from which it is derived is found in the New Testament more than fifty times, with such meanings as Desire, Beseech, Entreat, Pray. Adopting for this noun the sense of Appeal, Request, Prayer, Petition, Entreaty, we obtain an intelligible clause as above. That this is Peter's meaning will appear if we remember that a good conscience is exactly what a sinner lacks, Heb 9^{9}, 10^{2}; that he obtains it through Christ, Heb 9^{14}; and that he may retain it afterwards, Heb 10^{22}, 13^{18}; I Pet 2^{19}, 3^{16}. Baptism is the occasion when he acknowledges that it can be obtained in Christ alone.

"Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." This clause may be connected with the noun Request, for it is the resurrection that emboldens a penitent to plead for salvation, I Pet 1^{3}; and indeed it is the only guarantee that the Saviour can fulfil His promise to give rest to the heavy laden. But it is equally allowable to connect the clause with the verb Saves, as distinctly in A.V., for the power that saves is in the risen Christ, Acts 4^{10}, 5$^{30, 31}$. Both statements are true, both are made by Peter; the latter was perhaps in his mind here.

The sentence may then be thus paraphrased: 'Going into the ark, they were saved from the flood. This act of theirs resembles baptism, which now saves you, too, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism, of course, not as a mere outward ceremony, but as a prayer to God for a clear conscience.'

Peter did not trace out the resemblance between their going into the ark and being saved and baptism.

Some have attended chiefly to the form, and have often been misled by the mention of water: they have wondered how he could say that Noah was immersed into water, or was rained upon, when really he was dry in the ark, and the only people immersed never emerged alive. Their wonder ought to have put them on a better track. So far as form is concerned, Noah went into the ark and came out of it again after being totally enclosed in it; a Christian goes into the water and comes out of it again after being totally enclosed in it. But it was not the form that attracted Peter's attention, as he expressly said; it was the meaning. Noah, being warned by God concerning things not seen as yet, was moved with godly fear, and testified his faith by preparing an ark. At God's bidding he entered in, sundering himself from a sinful world; at God's bidding he came out into a new world. So on repentance and profession of faith he was baptized into the ark, pledging himself to God for a better life.

Apart from this figurative illustration, we have two unmistakable utterances: Baptism is not the mere putting away of the filth of the flesh; Baptism saves **by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

The caution is in line with the spiritual nature of Christ's religion, but was necessary in dealing with Jews accustomed to ceremonial ablutions freeing from technical defilement, and with Gentiles prone to superstitious ritualism. Once stated plainly, it was self-evident. Entering an ark could save Ham from a deluge, but did not change his evil nature; immersion in water might wash the body, but could not cleanse the soul. Not baptism itself saved, but what it signified. On the Divine side it pictured the resurrection, Rom 6[4]; on the human side it attested that the candidate desired

from God that peace which the world could not give, but which the risen Christ bade His apostles announce, John 20^{21}, and which Peter had faithfully proclaimed, Acts 10^{36}. Following that proclamation, he had urged on Cornelius the duty of baptism, and he evidently assumed here that, as in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, a convert could hardly have a good conscience until he was baptized. If he shrank from what he was told to be his duty, the quality of his faith was at once revealed to be poor; if he fulfilled it, there was some evidence that he might be obedient in all things. And so in that sense baptism saved, evidencing that he was by faith united to the Saviour, whose resurrection was the real efficient cause.

To-day, although preachers aim at conversion, unfortunately they often fail to follow on with this practical test of its reality. Little blame attaches to men who are thus misled into neglecting baptism. But the case is different with Bible students who make part of the word of God of no effect by their tradition; with preachers who neglect the command of their risen Lord, and these inspired precedents; with those who reverse Peter's caution and attend to the immersion and the utterance of a formula rather than to exciting a desire for a good conscience; and with those who utterly ignore conscience in the recipient, and "baptize" mere infants.

4$^{8-11}$. "The elect" in these districts were urged to **personal service**, each contributing to the welfare of all, and seeking to influence the outer world, 3$^{1, 15}$. The note of officialism is very absent from the letter, even the very name "church" never occurs in it, unless at 5^{13}.

5$^{1-4}$. Jesus was The Bishop in Peter's mind; for himself he would take only the title Elder. He and

others might tend the flock, Jesus was the Chief Pastor. The dangers of **officialism** that beset every organization were sure to emerge here—professionalism, mercenary motives, pride of office; they could be met by dwelling on the motives of Christ, and seeking to copy them.

5[13]. Very ancient authorities read here, "The **church** in Babylon salutes you." Whether or not the word was written, the meaning is nearly certain, though it is just possible Peter referred to his wife, I Cor 9[5].

Babylon is probably a metaphor for Rome. Jeremiah had concealed the Chaldean capital under a cryptogrammatic name, 25[26], 51[41]. Paul had boldly taken the real name Sinai and applied it to Jerusalem, Gal 4[25]. Rome was now playing the persecuting part once taken by Babylon, as this whole letter testifies, and the transfer of the name would convey a hint that as Babylon had fallen for her sins, so Rome, too, would fall. Similar transfers of name were common in Apocalyptic literature: Jerusalem called Sodom or Egypt, Rev 11[8]; Rome called Babylon, Rev 17[5, 6]. The old literal Babylon was at this time much less important than Seleucia and Ctesiphon, Jos. Ant. XVIII 9[8, 9], and Thomas was the apostle chiefly concerned in evangelizing that district. Mark was last heard of as about to visit Rome, II Tim 4[11].

Peter probably visited Rome. It was late in his career, after Prisca, Aquila, and others had gathered the brethren, after Paul had written to them on the understanding that he would not build on another's foundation, Rom 15[29], after Paul had spent some years there. But it is quite another thing to say in face of these facts that Peter had any special tie to Rome, or that Rome derives any special privileges from Peter.

I JOHN

The first epistle of John rose out of a few great thoughts. One was that the test whether we have life is, keeping God's commandments, 2^{3}. The chief of these is in a sense as old as Moses, 2^{7}, yet new by the enlarged meaning Jesus gave it on the night before His death, 2^{8}: **Love one another,** $3^{11, 14, 23}$, $4^{7, 11, 20, 21}$. Every action may be tested by this or by the other command implied, Love God, 5^{2}. His commandments are not grievous; all that He bids is Love, and that He first exemplified, 4^{7-11}.

Another leading thought was of the **indwelling of the Spirit** in each believer, or in the community, 3^{24}, 4^{13}. This suffices for all needful guidance, $2^{20, 27}$, and by His aid it is possible to detect false teaching, comparing with that of the apostles, 4^{1-6}. So for us to-day to recognize and avoid modern errors, we have the New Testament as the only standard of faith as well as of practice.

The means of obtaining this indwelling is the acceptance of the word of life, 1^{1-3}, 2^{24}; of maintaining it, believing on Christ's name and loving one another, $3^{23, 24}$. The use of material or ceremonial means is not even hinted at. What is the true **value of rites,** bearing witness, is suggested in one passage that may be thus paraphrased, with illustrative references to the gospel:

I John 5^{6-10}. 'You heard that some one was to come

into the world; a prophet, John 6[14]; the King of Israel, 12[13]; the Christ, the Son of God, 11[27]. Heralded by John, He came, 1[15, 27]; it was Jesus. He fulfilled these anticipations by dedicating Himself to a life of righteousness at His baptism in water; and again at His bloody sweat in Gethsemane, dedicating Himself to a bloody death of atonement on the cross. Not only in His baptism, when the Spirit descended on Him, do we behold Him as Christ, but also in His death fulfilling the scriptures, 19[24, 28, 36, 37]. And God set His seal to the claims of Jesus, for the Spirit whom He promised to His disciples, 14[16, 26], to bear witness of Him, 15[26], the Father has actually sent. Thus we have now three constant witnesses to the truth that Jesus is the Messiah: the Spirit, whose living energy in The Church and in each believer testifies that Jesus is exalted on high, 14[16—20], compare Acts 2[33]; baptism, which refers not only to His death, but to His resurrection, the proof of His Divine mission, 20[29]; the Lord's supper, which reminds us that salvation is by the blood of Jesus the Son, I 1[7], 2[1, 2]. These three present facts converge to prove the same truth that Jesus was the Christ, come in the flesh. But baptism and the Lord's supper are only testimonies borne by men; the greatest proof lies in God's Spirit energizing His Church, 14[12], 15[8], 17[21—23]. This new power can be seen by all at work in the world, can be felt by the believer at work in Himself.'

As some Unitarians continue to observe these two ceremonies, purely as memorials of a good man, we see that much the finest evidence of Christ's Divinity is a missionary church, I 4[13, 14].

III JOHN

This note gives a glimpse of travelling missionaries refusing support from heathen and accepting it from Christians; it has also a dark background of a haughty member despising apostolic authority and expelling those who accepted it. The vices of officialism that Peter foresaw had soon developed.

John, Gaius, Diotrephes, and Demetrius were apparently living in the province of Asia, some two hundred miles square, containing several Christian churches. The materials for studying **church organization** are peculiarly abundant in this district, and may be collected at this latest apostolic stage.

Christian work began at Ephesus with Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos working in the Jewish synagogue. It is somewhat significant that not a single first-class church was founded by any apostle. Three months after Paul joined them, the disciples were led out, and a building was engaged for the daily use of the new community. Before two years had passed, elders were appointed, doubtless on the plan that had obtained at Jerusalem and in Galatia, the brethren choosing and Paul installing.

While Paul thus made his headquarters at Ephesus, he had a staff whom he despatched right and left to evangelize or to help at existing churches—Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia, Timothy and Titus to

Achaia, Epaphras in Asia. Thus there grew up neighbouring churches at Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis, as also on the estates of Nymphas and Philemon, though apparently Paul did not himself visit these places. How far these places were organized we do not know, except that Archippus was in close touch with the Colossians, among whom perhaps he ministered, yet lived with Philemon.

When a few months later Paul was coasting along Asia with eight companions, he summoned the Ephesian elders to Miletus; there was apparently no time to summon those farther away. There was no sign yet of any one standing out above or with different duties from the rest; but it is singular that while the Gentile historian uses of them the Jewish title Elders, the Jewish apostle used to them the Gentile title Bishops. The two words were evidently interchangeable at that time and place.

Some three years later, Paul was at Rome, surrounded still with a staff including Tychicus, John Mark, Jesus Justus, Luke, and Demas, all available to carry out his orders or convey letters, besides others coming from the churches on special errands, such as Epaphras of Colosse and Epaphroditus of Philippi. Tychicus was despatched with Onesimus to Asia, bearing three letters which show that the churches were in constant and intimate relations. Indeed, the epistle to the Ephesians was probably not for them alone, but also for those at Laodicea and Colosse, and therefore presumably for all the churches in Asia. Paul had already sent two circular letters, one to the churches of Galatia, and the other to those in Achaia, though it was addressed primarily to the largest church there, Corinth.

In this Ephesian letter the titles Elder, Bishop, Deacon do not appear in the technical sense; but Apostles, Prophets, and Teaching Pastors are mentioned as appointed to organize the churches for active service. Another letter about the same time to an older church shows that Philippi had officers named Bishops and Deacons, with one man rather prominent among them. It is quite possible that this "true yokefellow" was not a local officer, but Luke, who had been left there on the first visit, and had rejoined Paul at the same point on the third. The constant intercommunication is evidenced by Epaphroditus bearing this letter, and advising them that Timothy would probably come soon to bring the news of Paul's acquittal and journey past them to Asia.

A year or two later we find Paul had journeyed by way of Achaia and Crete to Asia, and thence to Macedonia, with a staff including Artemas, Tychicus, Titus, and Timothy. Titus was detached in Crete to organize a church in each city, appointing officers to be known indifferently as Elders or Bishops. Timothy was similarly left in Asia, which was more advanced. The qualifications of Bishop and Deacons were described, and he was instructed as to the appointment, pay, and discipline of Elders. It almost appears as if the council once known as the Presbytery, composed of presbyters or Elders, were tending to be differentiated into one Bishop and several Deacons, all still bearing at times the older name Elders.

A few months later, Timothy's work had failed; all in Asia had turned away from Paul, and he was recalled to Paul's side, being replaced at Ephesus by Tychicus, who had Prisca, Aquila, and Trophimus near at hand. Timothy is not heard of again in connection with

Ephesus but as released from prison and about to come and see the Hebrews.

After Paul's second imprisonment at Rome, a circular letter to several provinces, including Asia, was written by Peter, who had attracted to his side some of Paul's staff, such as Silas and John Mark. His language about officers, if brief, is varied, exhorting Elders to be good Pastors and Bishops, not for gain nor for power.

During the next generation we have only faint hints from II Peter and Jude that Apostles and Prophets were passing away. The Revelation, however, sheds a curious light on the situation. We gather certainly that the place once filled by Paul and then by Peter was next occupied by John; that the churches in Asia had increased to seven at least—perhaps that Colosse and Hierapolis had succumbed to the heresy infecting them; that the churches of Asia formed such a closely knit group that a book containing notes for each of them could be published as one document. It would appear also that in each church there was one officer who was at once corresponding secretary and of sufficient importance to be addressed as representative of the church and perhaps held personally responsible for its condition.

Finally, we find in this brief epistle travelling evangelists still circulating among the churches and the heathen, II Cor 8^{23}, but confronted by a local member with influence enough to keep them out of his church, expel their sympathisers, and flout an apostle's authority.

It would be possible from early Christian literature outside the Bible to continue the story of the developement of organization, but we should not know how far

that developement met with apostolic approval. We can say with reasonable certainty that the **apostles did approve** of these points:

All the Christians of a city knit into one church:

All the churches of a province knit together:

All the churches whatever in fraternal intercourse:

Officers in each church chosen by the local members, recognized and installed by some one representing a wider circle:

Local officers preferably married, and certainly not divorced:

Their duties including finance, general business management, teaching, and pastoral oversight:

Local officers to be paid:

One local officer at least to be ready to entertain travelling Christians:

All officers to be on their guard against mercenary motives and ambition:

All members ready to support the authority of the officers:

All churches and officers ready to support the authority of the apostles, whether expressed orally or in writing or by messenger with credentials:

No church wantonly to depart from customs introduced by the apostles:

Travelling evangelists to be helped with hospitality and money:

State authority to be invoked for protection against outsiders, not for settling disputes among members:

State authority to be generally obeyed as of Divine institution, except when it clashed with obvious Divine orders.

On the other hand, we have **no adequate light** on these points;

Tenure of office, for a term of years, during good behaviour, or for life :

The standing of an officer of one church when removing to another town and joining the church there :

Necessary uniformity of organization towards which all were being guided :

Necessary uniformity of titles for officers :

Intended method of maintaining fellowship of churches when the apostles had passed away.

We are not quite in the dark on these subjects. Thus we see a decided tendency for the committee of Elders to give to one of their number a chairmanship with long tenure of office, and in the Gentile churches for the titles Bishop and Deacons to gain ground on the former title, Elders. But it is not clear how duties were allotted between these officers, and to what extent they monopolized the conduct of worship. Nor is it at all clear what relations subsisted between these local officers of business and the travelling ministers with special Divine gifts. And if this be unimportant as the latter were gradually disappearing, we have scarcely any light on what Paul expected when he could no longer send Tychicus, Timothy, Luke, or Titus with his authority to visit and superintend a group of churches ; or how John would recommend dealing with an unbrotherly Diotrephes when no apostle should survive. There is not, however, any trace of a permanent superintendent for each province, or with jurisdiction over any group of churches.

Students of church history know what did happen as a matter of fact ; a summary is given in the Epilogue.

JUDE

JUDE wrote this short letter in a sudden emergency due to the presence of false teachers, against whom his mildest charge was that they were pastors who without fear fed themselves, even at the love-feasts connected with the Lord's supper. He urged his readers to beware of them, to oppose them, and to discipline them.

Under ordinary conditions any church is guided by the officers which it appoints, to whom it entrusts a general initiative. But the apostles did not contemplate a sort of *lex regia* or plebiscite whereby a church vests practically all powers in its officers beyond power of reclaim. Even while Paul adjured the Thessalonians to respect their officers, he also bade them as a whole to admonish the disorderly. While he warned them not to despise prophesyings, he also laid it on them to prove all things. And though at Corinth prophets might speak, the others were to criticise. The church at Colosse was bidden exhort a minister to better service. Peter also, under similar circumstances to these, warned against false teachers. John bade his readers not believe every spirit, but test the spirits whether they were from God, as many false prophets were to be found. In the Revelation special commendation is given to the angel of the church at Ephesus for trying men styling themselves apostles, and rejecting them. So there is abundant evidence from every quarter that the words of the Son of Man were yet borne in mind, and that His followers recollected officers were to serve and not be served.

REVELATION

The Revelation to John was made chiefly in symbols. The imagery was drawn from the synagogue, the temple, the palace, as is traced in detail below. But no imagery was drawn from Christian customs. Of a church or of a minister there is no trace, once we end the letters to the seven churches and deal with the revelation proper, until once again the writer descended to earth, 22^{10-20}. Of the Christian ritual, baptism and the Lord's supper, there is no trace at all. This is the more remarkable as such symbolism would often have been natural. The facts they commemorate were always in view, the death and resurrection of Jesus. He was repeatedly mentioned as the Lamb, and His blood was also mentioned. We might well have expected in 5^{6-13}, 7^{9-17}, 14^{1}, 19^{9}, 22^{14}, some reference to the ceremonies He ordained. Nor can we explain the prophet's silence in that he never saw or had occasion to mention the material emblems; again and again he spoke of bathing and of drinking, of a cup of wine and of the water of life. Yet in no one of these many passages can we discover any allusion to the well-known Christian ritual. Even in such a passage as 14^{12}, where he seems to set down his calm reflection as to the meaning of his vision, he laid stress not on any virtue in outward form, but on keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This almost

ostentatious ignoring of Christian ritual is incompatible with attributing sacramental virtue to it. Churches, ministry, and sacraments belong to time, and are accidental; they are not even permanent enough to furnish any imagery here.

Revelation 1^{3}. Public worship among the Jews in the synagogue included the **reading aloud** of a lesson from The Law and another from the Prophets of the Old Covenant. In Christian circles the custom was retained, but the books read were not so limited. Paul's epistles were thus read, I Th 5^{27}, Col 4^{16}, and were soon ranked with the other scriptures, II Pet 3^{16}. Here we find a prophecy not simply uttered orally for one church, I Cor 14^{29-33}, but written out and circulated among several, with a warning against alteration, 22^{6-19}, and with a blessing on the public reader and the hearers. A prophet in the Spirit had a vision of Jesus as Lord, 1^{10}. As he was exiled from any church assembled together, and could only be with it in spirit, I Cor 14^{23}, 5^{4}, he was bidden write what he heard and saw, and send to the seven churches to edify and exhort and console; compare I Cor 12^{3}, $14^{3,4}$.

The public worship to which the prophet was accustomed was of course that of the **synagogue**. Other allusions to its customs occur in the book. Thus rival congregations are branded as synagogues of Satan, 2^{9}, 3^{9}; the elders on the chief seats are mentioned, 4^{4}, 14^{3}, 19^{4}; the lamps, the book, the trumpets, that were the usual furnishings of a synagogue, supplied imagery for his visions, 4^{5}, 5^{2}, 8^{2}.

$1^{5,6}$. Other sources of imagery appear here—a royal court and a temple for ritual worship; and the leading thoughts come thus early: Jesus is Ruler of kings, His

Church is itself kingly; Jesus is High Priest, His Church is itself priestly. These sources deserve separate grouping and study further on.

1[10]. **The Lord's day** is not mentioned by this title elsewhere in the New Testament. But the first day of the week, on which the Lord rose from the dead and appeared to the disciples, on which a week later He appeared again, on which seven weeks later He sent the Spirit from heaven, was early singled out for more elaborate worship. Paul advised the Corinthians to utilize it as the day for regular contribution, and he waited at Troas in order to conduct worship then. This is another case in which we see special attention paid to it, by man in private worship, by Jesus in revealing Himself anew.

1[20]. The word **Angel** here and in the next two chapters hardly seems to bear the same meaning as in 1[1], 5[2], and ever afterwards. The usual meaning there, as in all scripture, is of a messenger from God, of a different order of creation from man. But such a meaning here is most difficult. Why should Jesus, instead of speaking direct to such superhuman beings, employ John to write to them? How would the letters be delivered? How could the seven churches of Asia profit? John himself needed explanations and rebukes from such an angel, and it would be very strange if he were commissioned to convey counter rebukes; such a thing has no parallel in scripture.

If instead of the word Angel some unknown word stood here, whose meaning we had to gather solely from the context, we could easily interpret it. It would be easily seen to signify the **secretary of the church**—a man who not only received correspondence from the outside, but who was of sufficient importance to be

held personally liable for anything wrong in the church; a man with authority to test pretenders to apostleship and to discipline evil livers; a man who could in person suffer, witness a good confession, be a living lie, or be rich; a man perhaps who had not courage to restrain his wife from debauching his church; a man who could be distinguished from those in his church who were standing fast, or those in his church who were lapsing.

Since this is the apparent meaning, the question arises why the term Angel should be applied to such a prominent church officer. The explanation may possibly be along the lines of synagogue imagery. The prominent people in a synagogue were Ruler, Elders, Attendant. This last officer, whose duties were the least important, and included taking care of the building and its property, was called by various titles, Chazzan, Sheliach. There seems some faint ground for supposing that this latter title was occasionally rendered into Greek, as Angelos, Ezek 23[40]. Consider now the whole Christian Church as one Synagogue, even as the Hebrews were accustomed to speak of one Congregation of the Lord, and were bidden to think of it as a General Assembly. Its Ruler would be Jesus, the chief Pastor and Bishop; its Elders would be the apostles, two of whom were content to assume that title, I Pet 5[1], II John[1], III John[1]; its Angel or Messenger would then on such a scale be the local minister. James might be a great man at Jerusalem, and the "true yoke-fellow" at Philippi, and Diotrephes at his church in Asia; but the separate congregations were only part of one great body. The seven ministers of the seven churches of Asia were now receiving warning or encouragement from their Ruler, sent through one of the Elders of the

great Christian Synagogue, and in such relations they were mere subordinates and could receive only the lowly title of Caretaker or Angel. Figurative and fanciful this explanation certainly is, and therein it is in keeping with the whole character of this book.

3[21]. The **kingly imagery** in the book emerges again here, and it may well be grouped for study. Repeated mention is made of a throne, occupied primarily by God the Father, 4[2], 5[13], 6[16], 7[11, 15, 17], 14[3], 16[17], 19[4, 5], 21[5]; it is at length shared by the Lamb, 22[3]; on either side are thrones for elders, 4[4], 11[16], 14[3]; and to this range of thrones are to be admitted all triumphant martyrs, 20[4]. The Lamb is to reign for ever and ever, 11[15], King of kings and Lord of lords, 19[16]; to share His rule He admits His followers, 1[6], 20[6], 22[5].

Under fresh imagery we have the familiar doctrines of the unity of Christ and His disciples, the identity of destiny, and the glories thus reserved for The Church.

5[6]. Interwoven with this is the **priestly imagery**, which is far the most prominent. There is the temple court open to all comers, 11[2]; the inner court thronged with Christian priests, 7[9, 15]; the great altar for sacrifice, 6[9], 11[1], 14[18], 16[7]; the Lamb once offered in sacrifice, 5[6, 9, 12]; the temple building beyond the altar, 11[2], 14[15, 17], 15[5–8], 16[1, 17]; the golden altar of incense in its outer chamber, 8[3], 9[13]; the ark of the covenant in its inner chamber, 11[19]; the winged seraphs and cherubs around the Lord on His throne, glorifying Him unceasingly, 4[7], 5[6, 14], 7[11], 14[3], 19[4]. None of this refers to the temple in Jerusalem; that city is stigmatized as a Sodom and Egypt, 11[8]; this is the heavenly temple which Moses beheld, of which the tabernacle built by Bezalel and Oholiab was but a shadowy copy, and of which Isaiah once caught a glimpse.

Two sacrifices only are spoken of—that of the Lamb once slain, but now living, and that of incense within the veil. The latter is rendered by the followers of the Lamb, the royal priesthood, 1^{6}, 5^{10}, 20^{6}, offering prayer, 5^{8}, 8^{3}, and praise, 7^{9-15}. Thus the same old truths are depicted again in fresh colours: Christ offered the one atoning sacrifice, whose merit remains eternally available, 13^{8}, and constituted all His followers priests, to offer the minor sacrifices. Of an inner official priesthood there is no trace. Such is The Church of the present.

21^{1}—22^{5}. There is, however, an anti-climax, sketching faintly the future. In the new Jerusalem there shall be no temple, 21^{22}. But while God will have direct and permanent intercourse with all men, there are still traces of a special duty and privilege for **The Church.** It is a holy city, built on the foundations laid by the twelve apostles, and distinct from the nations and the kings of the earth, who approach God by its means. It is the bride of the Lamb, distinct from those who are only bidden to the marriage supper. It is the household which serves the Lamb on the one hand, and on the other reigns for ever over the nations, to whom it ever brings healing.

EPILOGUE

Every word of God is tried: Add thou not unto His words.

The New Testament sets before us every necessary principle relating to The Church and its embodiments on earth in churches. So agree all Evangelicals, and in these pages it has been sought to recognize and expound everything on the subject. Sacerdotalists, however, prefer appending the Bible to tradition, claiming that "The Church" must teach, the Bible only prove. Although a common ground for argument is limited, it can at least be shown that the Bible disproves three characteristic doctrines which they urgently teach:

I. APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.

This theory is thus stated by Haddan:

"Without bishops, no presbyters." Here the terms are not used as in the New Testament, for we read of presbyters without reading of bishops, as in Galatia, and in circumstances that exclude all thought of bishops, as at Jerusalem. Haddan, however, means that without some district officer there can be no local officers, even as presbyters in Crete were to be appointed by Titus.

Now it is certainly true that local officers were always installed with the help and recognition of others, representing a district or the whole body of Christians, and it is also true that no local body was allowed to break away from general usage. But this proposition rather outsteps these facts, and can hardly be proved from scripture. And it is shown below that for centuries after the apostolic age there was no custom of a district officer ruling over several local officers. Thus, on Anglican traditional principles, this proposition is false.

"Without bishops and presbyters, no legitimate certainty of sacraments." This has no support from Scripture. In the discussion with the Corinthians as to the Lord's supper, officers are quite ignored. There is indeed no passage that connects the officers and the rites; and certain indications absolutely disconnect them, for our Lord, Peter, and Paul did not habitually baptize.

"Without sacraments no certain union with the mystical body of Christ—namely, His Church." Another unscriptural assumption, attaching to sacraments a value far in advance of that assigned to them by the apostles. Were it not that the Corinthians were disorderly, we should have heard nothing from any apostle except Matthew about the Lord's supper. Moreover, there is a strong suggestion that sacraments assure such a union, while daily experience proves that these are valueless apart from a right attitude of heart.

"Without this [union with the Church] no certain union with Christ." Another assumption and suggestion of a falsehood. See Mark 9^{38-40}.

"Without that union, no salvation." This confounds The Church and the Kingdom. It ignores the cases

of heathen, of infants, and of those who died before Christ.

Accepting such a limitation, a truer series of propositions for the present day would be:

Without repentance and faith, no union with Christ:

Without union with Christ, no salvation:

Without salvation, no Church:

Without a church, no preaching, no baptisms, no fellowship, no officers.

The authorities of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America made overtures at Chicago for a merger of churches, and referred to the **Historic Episcopacy** as a necessity. The phrase was adopted and popularized by a Pan-Anglican Synod at Lambeth. But the title Bishop was given by Paul to each of several elders in one city, by Ignatius to a single ruler over a single congregation, by Cyprian to a single ruler over several congregations in one city, by the council of Chalcedon to a ruler over several congregations in one province. The Society of Friends, Independents, Methodists, Lutherans have these four types of Historic Episcopacy. If Anglicans do not mean to recognize these, the ambiguous phrase had better be disused.

II. CLERICALISM, PAPACY.

One is your Teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth.

For perhaps a century and a half after the apostolic age there continued much freedom and variety both in organization and in nomenclature, though the germs of the system that ultimately prevailed can be traced back very early, and the changes of type were very gradual. The system of one man presiding over each

church spread rapidly through Syria and Asia Minor. Loyalty to him, as the only means of maintaining unity in the congregation, was urged by Ignatius, presiding over the Christians of Antioch, Eph 4—6. His ideal was, one bishop, a council of elders, and several deacons, wherein we find a new combination of titles. He compared them respectively to God the Father, the college of apostles, and Jesus Christ, Trall 2, 3. Polycarp at Smyrna, however, did not mention his deacons when writing to Philippi; and, while naming deacons there besides elders, said nothing about a bishop, 1, 5, 6. Justin mentioned only president and deacons in his popular account of Christian worship, Apol 1[67]. The Jewish-Christian churches had local bishops and deacons, with prophets and teachers tending to settle rather than travel, Did 13—15. The terms Elder and Bishop were still interchangeable at Corinth in the days of Clement, 44, and at Alexandria in the days of Hadrian. The evidence cited by Lightfoot, Phil, pp. 225, 226, is not to be dismissed as a "rhetorical flourish," for Jerome wrote in his 146th letter that at Alexandria the elders retained the custom of choosing their own president till 233 A.D., and their right was only extinguished at the establishment under Constantine, according to a subsequent patriarch. At Rome the titles Bishops and Deacons were favoured by misquoting the Greek version of Isa 60[17]. Among the Roman officers was one employed to draft a letter to Corinth for the church, and he distinctly asserted that "our apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the bishops' office," and that therefore they ordered a life tenure, 44. Hermas of Rome spoke of leaders or elders presiding over the church,

with Clement writing to other churches, and Grapte instructing the widows and orphans, Visions $2^{2,4}$. He also recognized apostles, bishops, teachers, and deacons as known in the churches, 3^{5}: apostles and teachers, deacons for the poor, bishops for hospitality, Parables 9^{25-27}. Irenæus and Papias often referred to the elders, including and succeeding the apostles. Herein they not only agreed with Ignatius, but were following the directions of Paul, II Tim 2^{2}. The monarchical system, however, prevailed.

The stages of growth within the Roman Empire are well marked. Four were generally accepted without serious dissent; the others provoked protest, nonconformity, and division:

About A.D. 100 Clement insisted on officers continuing for life or during good behaviour. Shortly afterwards Ignatius urged one president in each city as a focus of unity. Irenæus about 180 claimed that orthodoxy was guaranteed only by a succession of presidents transmitting apostolic doctrine. Cyprian by 250 established the supremacy of the president in his own city, irrespective of his own council of elders or of other presidents. He also claimed that Divine grace was only guaranteed by adhering to the president, the chief priest, the vicegerent of Christ; that in one city there could be only one church; that the presidents everywhere constituted a moral unity. For two generations longer each city church retained a certain local self-government; but when secular statesmen failed to break the Christian spirit, and decided to adopt this oligarchic system into the State hierarchy, three further stages were soon reached, representing fairly well Presbyterianism, Diocesan episcopacy, Papacy. Hosius and Constantine in 314 and 325 made the councils of

presidents legal and authoritative instead of consultative. Theodosius and the council of Constantinople in 381 confirmed to the presidents in the capitals a jurisdiction over all others in their provinces. Damasus and Leo claimed, and Valentinian in 445 legalized the claim, that the president at Rome was head of all the Western churches.

On this very topic of "The Church" every Anglican clergyman is supposed to acknowledge that the churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome have all erred, both in living and manner of ceremonies, and in matters of faith. To the Evangelical it is axiomatic that every stage in this developement is open to criticism and abandonment. Apostolic commands and customs alone can be binding and necessary to the existence of a church, and an attempt has been made to sum these in the note on III John. Perhaps even these may be condensed; and extravagances not only of individual conduct but also of church government may be avoided by following the Master's rule, Love one another.

III. SACERDOTALISM AND SACRAMENTARIANISM.

How turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments?

The doctrine of Apostolic Succession arose from a distortion of an apostolic saying; Clericalism sprang from the ambition so common among men, fostered by reasons of State policy; Ritualism infected the churches from the heathen world, but was defended by a misuse of the Old Testament. Against it we need only study closely the epistle to the Hebrews. It would have been easy to take another line of

argument with those who were clinging to the old Jewish system, and to pander to their immature conceptions. '**Change your Jewish ritual for our Christian**, circumcision for baptism, passover for Lord's supper, sabbath for Lord's day, Aaronic priesthoods for Christian ministry. We will meet you half-way, will call our elders Priests, and their chairman High Priest, and will introduce some deacons to match the Levites. We will build our houses of worship like the temple, with an outer court for non-Christian outsiders, an inner division for Christians, another for the priests, and a Holy of holies. We will call the Lord's table an altar, and speak about offering a sacrifice on it. We will match every Jewish rite with some Christian rite, if only we may win over and hold fast all Jews.'

This was exactly what the next generation began to do. In a manual for the Jewish-Christian churches, we find analogies traced thus: "Let not your fastings stand with those of the hypocrites, for they fast on the second day of the week and the fifth; but do you fast on the fourth and on Friday. Nor pray like the hypocrites, but as the Lord ordered in His gospel. . . . Let not your sacrifice [of the Eucharist] be profaned, for this is what was said by the Lord, In every place and time bring Me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great King, saith the Lord, and My name is marvellous among the nations," Didache, 8, 14. And the Jewish-Christian churches withered.

The Gentile churches resisted the temptation longer. The "Epistle of Barnabas" emphatically opposed this transfer, and traced scores of spiritual truths prefigured in Jewish rites and facts. Even at the outset it was

said, 2, 3, "Sacrifices and whole burnt offerings and oblations . . . He annulled, that the new law of our Lord Jesus Christ, being pure from the yoke of restraint, might have its oblation not made by human hands. . . . Let us not as novices shipwreck ourselves upon their Law." Ignatius warned the churches in Asia, "If even unto this day we live after the manner of Judaism, we avow that we have not received grace. . . . It is monstrous to talk of Jesus Christ and to practise Judaism (Magn 8, 10). Take only Christian food and abstain from strange herbage, which is heresy, for these men even mingle Jesus Christ with poison (Trall 6). If any one propound Judaism unto you, hear him not (Ph 6)." Yet his language about the Altar at the Eucharist shows he himself was slightly infected Clement of Rome repeated, 36, 40, that Jesus Christ is the High Priest of our offerings, yet presently in the interests of orderly worship at Corinth spoke of offerings and ministrations, high priest, priests, Levites, and laymen as if these were institutions of the Master. Diognetus, however, was chiefly anxious to hear about Christians not practising their religion in the same way as the Jews, and was assured that "their scruples about meats and their superstition relating to the sabbath and the vanity of their circumcision" were ridiculous, 3, 4. Aristides objected to the methods of Jewish service, in observing sabbaths and new moons and passover and fasts and circumcision and cleanness of meats; but he did not hint that these had Christian physical counterparts, 14. Justin had a long debate with a Jew, and told him that prayers and thanksgiving offered by the worthy were the only perfect and acceptable sacrifices, and that Christians were the true sacerdotal race, Trypho, 116. Yet in some ambiguous

sentences he connected the bread and wine specially with sacrifice, 41, 70, 117, and attached some importance to the prayer of the president over it, Apol 1^{67}. Tertullian also wavered: in his treatise On Prayer he opposed the Jewish habit of washing before prayer, declaring it superstitious; but in discussing whether the Eucharist might be received fasting, spoke of standing at the altar of God. This was perhaps only an unfortunate illustration, for he said explicitly, "We are the true worshippers and the true priests, who, praying in the spirit, sacrifice in the spirit the prayer peculiar and acceptable to God." But presently he and his Montanist friends fell into the error of reproducing days and hours and weeks for fasts, and were rebuked by appeals to Matt 15^{11}, I Cor 8^{8}, Galatians, Rom 14^{17-20}. With Cyprian we get a fairly consistent reproduction of Jewish terminology and thought: "That priest acts well in Christ's stead who imitates what Christ did, and he then offers a true and full sacrifice in the Church to God the Father. . . . For the sacrifice which we offer is the suffering of the Lord," $63^{14, 17}$. And although Origen opposed both the clerical ambition and the sacerdotal doctrine, his enemies at Alexandria banished him, Cyprian's views prevailed and were elaborated into the great Catholic system of ritual and doctrine.

In view of this fatal declension, it is instructive that the epistle to the Hebrews gives no starting-point for such a process. The argument is not, 'Replace Jewish rites by Christian,' but, '**Abandon symbols for reality.** Discussion about baptisms is regarded as elementary, 6^{1}; the blood of the covenant never elicited a remark about the Lord's supper, 9^{15-20}, 10^{29}, 12^{24}; the Lord's day is not mentioned; the Christian ministry is barely alluded to, $13^{17, 24}$.

Three ceremonies only are approved by the apostles. The Lord's day reminds us of the triumphant rise from the dead that assures us the atonement was complete and all believers are pardoned. Baptism gives us a double look—at the burial after the atoning death with the resurrection that followed it, and at the death of the penitent to sin with the rise of the believer to new life. The Lord's supper recalls to us the true passover when the Lamb of God was slain, and the new covenant ratified in His blood. The only authoritative ritual thus refers directly and emphatically to the great sacrifice in which He was at once Priest and Victim. Its connection with Jewish ritual is of the slightest. It is never said that any one rite replaces any Jewish rite. If any new rites are introduced, they must inevitably shift the emphasis from the one all-important point, that Jesus has made full atonement, that sins are forgiven as soon as there is repentance and trust in Him.

And if from worship we turn to worshippers, we find in the New Testament frequent mention of priests, but no such title for Christian ministers, despite the great variety of names given to them. A literal body of priests on the Jewish lines is excluded by Heb 7^{13}, the spiritual priesthood of Christ is asserted instead, and that of all believers in I Pet 2. The same result comes from considering functions: the sacrifices mentioned are of praise, prayer, and gifts to relieve the needy, all of which are to be offered by all believers. For an interior official priesthood there is no warrant, and all the spirit of the New Testament is against it. The only other priests and sacrifices known here are mentioned in Eph 5^{2}, Rom 12^{1}, 15^{16}: Christ gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God: Present your

bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, your spiritual service: I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable. Foreign missionaries are the most honoured priests, a convert from heathendom is the grandest sacrifice, for The Church is Christ's agent on earth to win all men to Himself.

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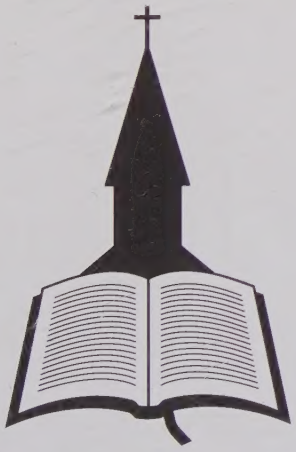

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